

JEAN-LAMBERT TALLIEN  
AND THE REIGN OF TERROR  
IN BORDEAUX, 1793-1794

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## INTRODUCTION

Jean-Lambert Tallien, a somber and enigmatic figure, has come to represent for historians the personification of the revolutionary terrorist. Amoral and opportunistic, he was repressive or moderate depending upon the turn of Jacobin opinion which alone governed his actions. Tallien demonstrated nothing in his early life which presaged the role in which the revolution was later to cast him. He was, indeed, an unlovable youth, a constant complainer and a poor student. An aspiring journalist on the eve of the Revolution, he was virtually unknown to politics, and contented himself with slowly adjusting to the new order. During the sitting of the Legislative Assembly, he served as secretary to the deputy Brostaret, edited a radical pamphlet series, L'Ami du Citoyen, and denounced the counter-revolutionaries from the rostrum of the legislature. He was one of those rabble-rousers who, despite mediocre talents and lack of experience, was catapulted into historical prominence.

Tallien was a secretary of the Paris Commune on August 10, 1792, the day that Louis XVI was deposed, but he played a relatively unimportant role in the events of that day. It was not until his election to the National Convention in September of this year that he got the opportunity to distinguish himself. As a Conventionnel he was sent to the departments as a deputy on mission, first by the Committee of General Security and later by the Committee of Public Safety. It was in this capacity that he made his most substantial contribution to the Revolution.

The revolutionary ideas emanating from the liberal clubs and salons of the capital were not greeted in many provincial centers with the same enthusiasm as the Parisians demonstrated. Aristocrats, federalists, and counter-revolutionists throughout France grouped together and plotted resistance to the revolutionary program of reform. It was imperative to disperse these forces before they succeeded in provoking a widespread civil war. The means employed by the Convention to destroy this opposition was the deputy on mission of which Tallien was one of the most prominent representatives. The deputy on mission aided the local administration in establishing revolutionary commissions, armies, and taxes. Entire governments were reorganized. Embodying the majesty of the nation, the deputy on mission "travelled in the reflected brilliance of his glory, like the proconsuls of Rome or the satraps of ancient Persia."<sup>1</sup> He made arrests, created revolutionary courts, and conducted trials. All of this was intended to force the provincials to accept the prevailing philosophy of the day, the Jacobin theory of the state.

Though he had previously acted in other areas as an agent of the Paris regime, it was at Bordeaux, the capital of the conservative Gironde, that Tallien became best known. The state of opinion in Bordeaux worried the Jacobins in Paris very much. It was a center of the federalist revolt, and they feared that any extension of the rebellion would overthrow the newly established Republic. They also feared that this important commercial center might be surrendered to the Allied forces. Tallien, because he had discharged his revolutionary duties so effectively at Lyon, Tours, and indeed, everywhere he had been sent by his colleagues, was chosen to administer the department of the Gironde.

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<sup>1</sup>R.R. Palmer, Twelve Who Ruled, The Committee of Public Safety (Princeton and London, 1941), 132.



By the last week in August 1793, he had reached his base of operations in the area, the city of Agen in the department of Lot-et-Garonne. Two months of planning ensued before he triumphantly arrived in Bordeaux on October 16 accompanied by a revolutionary army and eight other deputies on mission. He became the sworn opponent of all counter-revolutionaries, and did not hesitate to use terror to insure his purposes. How well he succeeded in his brief (1793-1794) year of terror and revolution in Bordeaux is the theme of this essay. Since he was a convinced Republican there can be little doubt that in this city he would have to use terror to defend the Revolution. As a firm believer in the Jacobin faith this was the only path he could take.

Not until his period of proconsulship was almost over did he realize that moderation might achieve the same results as repression. Neither program was sufficiently successful however, and his relative failure angered the Paris Jacobins. They came to regard him as totally unworthy of his position for he was too moderate in respect to the revolutionary ideas he was supposed to espouse and disseminate. Recalled to Paris in March of 1794, Tallien appeared before the Convention and vindicated himself. He was shortly thereafter elected President of this body. Beyond the halls of the assembly he attacked Robespierre because, he said, the Incorruptible was venal. In truth, he saw the Sword of Damocles over his own head and, realizing that he would be liquidated by the Robespierrists in any contest at the Convention, he resolved to strike the first blow. He did so on 9 Thermidor by demanding Robespierre's head and the overthrow of the Republic of Virtue. In this endeavor he was entirely successful.

Tallien is not a sympathetic figure and he has few redeeming virtues. In Bordeaux he typified the deputy on mission. Pressured into terrorism

by the opinion of the Jacobins, he represented a France which was in revolutionary turmoil, and became a leading exponent of the indispensable terror organizations, the revolutionary tribunal and the Committee of Public Safety. The forces which drove a man such as Jean-Lambert Tallien can never be fully appreciated or understood. His was a life of revolution and when the revolution ended, his day of power was irrevocably over.

## CHAPTER I

### THE EARLY CAREER OF JEAN-LAMBERT TALLIEN

Jean-Lambert Tallien, the son of a Parisian hotel keeper, was twenty-two years old at the advent of the Revolution. He had received a fine education largely due to the generosity of his father's patron, the Count de Bercy. As he grew older he was employed as a clerk, first with a notary and later with an attorney. With the first rumblings of the revolution he became a secretary to the deputy Brostaret at the Legislative Assembly. By the early days of 1791 he had worked himself into an important position at the offices of the journal, Le Moniteur Universel.

During these early years in Paris, Tallien kept himself politically active. He founded a fraternal society in the faubourg St.-Antoine, became its president, and in August 1791 he established a radical journal of his own entitled L'Ami du Citoyen. This paper, through its excessive use of revolutionary epithets, aroused the ire of the Parisians against Louis XVI, his ministers, and his policies. As an unofficial Jacobin journal, it also kept the affiliated societies in the department informed of crucial events in the capital.<sup>1</sup> This publication, partially supported by Jacobin funds, rapidly gained a respectable following among this group for its attacks upon the Feuillant journals.

Though he was slowly increasing his reputation through his political writings, it was the overthrow of Louis XVI on August 10, 1792 which threw Tallien actively into the political mêlée. By this date he had

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<sup>1</sup>James M. Thompson, Robespierre (Oxford, 1939), 200.

succeeded in becoming secretary of the Paris Commune, the organization which seized control of the French administration when the King was suspended. Exactly two weeks later Tallien came before the Assembly and vehemently denounced all the deputies who had deserted their posts at the legislature.<sup>1</sup> As secretary of the Commune, he had taken the precaution of ordering that no passports were to be issued to these men. The representatives of the nation should maintain their seats until replaced by the new legislative body, the National Convention, he stated.<sup>2</sup> On this point the Assembly unanimously agreed. They then requested Tallien to supply the names of the men who had wished to depart. Clearly, he was beginning to make an impression upon the legislators of the new France.

On August 31, he delivered an oration defending the Commune from the slanders of its enemies. The Paris Commune had saved the nation, he asserted. If the Assembly decided to strike this body it would also have to "strike ... the people who made the revolution of July 14, and who consolidated it by [the insurrection of] August 10, and who will maintain it ...."<sup>3</sup> All that the heroes of August 10 wanted was justice. They would willingly obey the people's wishes.

Less than three days later, conditions in Paris had reached such a state of frenzy that the cry went up, most notably by Marat's

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<sup>1</sup>See speech of August 26, 1792; Procès-Verbal de L'Assemblée Nationale (16 volumes, Paris, 1791-1792), XIII, 355. Some deputies had even gone to the extent of arranging aliases for themselves in hope of eluding surveillance committee members. Another fine account of this matter is contained in the Réimpression de l'ancien Moniteur, seule histoire authentique inaltérée de la Révolution française depuis la réunion des Etats-Généraux jusqu'au Consulat, May 1784 - November 1799 (32 volumes, Paris, 1863-1870), XIII, 543.

<sup>2</sup>Speech of Tallien; Procès-Verbal, XIII, 356.

<sup>3</sup>Speech at the Assembly, August 31, 1792; Réimp. Moniteur, XIII, 587.

L'Ami du Peuple, for the blood of the imprisoned priests and counter-revolutionaries. Tallien's role in the September massacres is obscure, but his enemies believed it to be important. For the remainder of his career he was hampered with the title of Septembrizer in the worst sense of the word. But he constantly denied this charge, claiming to have saved rather than destroyed many people.<sup>1</sup> It is certain, however, that he was one of those who countersigned the fatal decree of September 5, promising payment to the men employed in "the expedition" against the priests. He later wrote a work entitled La Vérité sur les événements du 2 Septembre in which he said: "In time of revolution and agitation, it is necessary to draw a veil and to leave to history the care of consecrating and appreciating this epoch of the Revolution which has been more useful than one thinks...."<sup>2</sup>

Demonstrating in any case that he was of sufficient mettle to be considered a "true" revolutionist, Tallien was elected to the National Convention as a deputy from the Paris section of Seine-et-Oise. He was an active participant in the early days of the Convention using his position as a leader of the Parisian mob to the best advantage. He seized upon his office, in fact, to denounce the failures of men and policies. The General, Montesquiou was militarily inept, he asserted, and before he led his army into Savoy, the troops would be completely disorganized because of his inefficiency.<sup>3</sup> When the general proved to be successful, Tallien refused to retract his remarks, and the incident apparently was forgotten at the Convention.

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<sup>1</sup>Speech of September 2, 1793; ibid., XIII, 603.

<sup>2</sup>A. Kucinski, Dictionnaire des Conventionnels (Paris, 1917), 575.

<sup>3</sup>Speech of September 23, 1792; Réimp. Moniteur, XIV, 34.

He still regarded the defense of the Commune as his primary responsibility but, as time passed, he began to turn his attention more and more to the faltering Girondins. The failure of the Girondin ministry to wage a victorious campaign hastened their decline in the Convention. To weaken this government even further, the outbreak of war in the Vendee added the embarrassment of internal chaos to the already pressing foreign crisis. The Jacobins were beginning to entrench themselves in positions of importance in the government. Tallien, as a representative of the rising radicals, declared on November 20, 1792 that Roland was unworthy of any confidence, Brissot was a scoundrel, Louvet was an intriguer, and Clavière deserved nothing better than to be deposed.<sup>1</sup>

Less than a month later Tallien was endeavoring to trace a connection between the Marquis de Lafayette, Bailly, the Mayor of Paris, and Louis XVI, then on trial for his life. All three were linked through his speeches and articles to counter-revolutionary activities. Toward the King, Tallien showed no pity. He would not allow the former monarch to communicate with his wife or family, and he was indeed censured by his colleagues at the Convention for this hardhearted attitude.<sup>2</sup>

On January 7, 1793 Tallien proposed a solution as to the final disposition of Louis. In his opinion "Louis Capet, former King of the French, traitor to the nation, ..., assassin of 100,000 citizens, and usurper of the national sovereignty ..." should be executed with

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<sup>1</sup>Kuscinski, Dictionnaire des Conventionnels, 575.

<sup>2</sup>J. Mavidal and E. Laurent, Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860; recueil complet des débats législatifs et politiques des chambres françaises (82 vols., Paris, 1862-1913), first series, 1787-1799, IV, 66; or Réimp. Moniteur, XIV, 754. Both are excellent accounts.

the shortest delay.<sup>1</sup> After this statement there was no question as to the way he would vote at the King's trial.

The first question asked of the deputies was whether Louis was guilty of a conspiracy against the safety of the state. Tallien, together with the majority of the deputies, voted in the affirmative.<sup>2</sup> The same day, January 15, he voted against referring this question to the people.<sup>3</sup> On the third and most important question regarding the punishment of the prisoner, Tallien stated that "the law has spoken, the interest of the State, the interest of the people demand it be applied; I vote for death."<sup>4</sup> For the fourth and last question, the matter of whether or not to grant a reprieve to the Bourbon ruler, Jean-Lambert uttered a phrase which comes as no great surprise. Strangely enough it was based upon "humanitarian motives." "Is it not cruel to leave ... a man waiting for his death? I demand that the question be settled," he continued, "... so as not to prolong the anguish of the condemned."<sup>5</sup> His vote at the trial suggests the role of terrorist which he was later to play.

In the previous October, Tallien had been appointed an alternate member of the Committee of General Security by the Convention.<sup>6</sup> This Committee controlled all the police functions of the State. On the day of Louis' execution the Convention, almost in gratitude for

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<sup>1</sup>See proposal of J.-L. Tallien concerning the King; Archives Parlementaires, LVI, 571.

<sup>2</sup>See vote of January 15, 1793; ibid., LVII, 69.

<sup>3</sup>See vote of January 15, 1793; ibid., 87.

<sup>4</sup>See vote of January 16-17, 1793; ibid., 374.

<sup>5</sup>Statement of J.-L. Tallien on the question of a reprieve for the King, January 18, 1793; ibid., 429.

<sup>6</sup>Decree of October 17, 1792; ibid., LIX, 547.

Tallien's conduct, elected him a full member of this Committee.<sup>1</sup> In February, he was dispatched by that body, along with deputy Legendre to Forges-les-Eaux, in Seine-Inferieure, to identify the citizen Paris, a suicide and alleged assassin of the Conventionnel, LePellitier. They identified the man as the murderer, and submitted a written report on their findings to the legislature which accepted it with a minimum of discussion.<sup>2</sup>

Leaving the capital soon thereafter, Tallien journeyed to Lyon, a center of disaffection, harboring many anti-revolutionaries. On February 25, he made an oral report to the Convention on the Lyonnais treason. He suggested at this time that three commissaires (deputies on mission) from the Convention be sent to Lyon without delay "in order to re-establish order there." This proposal was adopted. A month later he was dispatched to Loir-et-Cher and Indre-et-Loire to enforce the recruitment (levée) of March 9. Exactly two weeks later he submitted a report in which he demanded a careful scrutiny of several of the generals in command of armies of the west. He accused one such officer of being "either an imbecile or a traitor."<sup>3</sup> Tallien also requested that a large army be raised and trained to combat the professional soldiers of Austria and Prussia. It was unfair to send untrained French recruits against these disciplined soldiers. His requests again met with approval from the legislators.

Soon afterwards he returned from his mission and was almost immediately dispatched to Tours, another city troubled by rebellion.

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<sup>1</sup>Decree of January 21, 1793, ibid., LVII, 547.

<sup>2</sup>See report on the Paris mission; ibid., LXVIII, 233-235.

<sup>3</sup>Speech of March 23, 1793; ibid., LX, 458.



From here he wrote that the entire Vendée was in a "frightful state of civil war." Several of the republican forts had fallen to the rebels, but still the republican troops were uninspired. Tallien exclaimed further in this letter: "You [the Convention] have told us that [General] Biron would come here, and Biron has not: you had promised us guns but we have never seen them; you say that battalions are coming to our aid, and we receive a badly organized badly armed Germanic legion.... I no longer wish to deceive you," he continued, "...; the dangers are more pressing than ever..."<sup>1</sup> His letters now showed the urgency of his mission. Despite his warnings, the Vendée flared up in open rebellion. There was little that the Convention could do.

Recalled to Paris in the last week of July 1793, Tallien made a series of notable speeches at the Convention. He offered a vigorous defense for the General, Rossignol, who was accused of treason and was on trial for his life. Tallien spoke in glowing terms of Rossignol's revolutionary record, his war record, his organizing skill, his generalship. The general, accused of burning and pillaging houses for no reason, found an able defender in Tallien who declared: "...What does it matter to me, the pillage of some houses.... I speak of the ... houses of aristocrats..."<sup>2</sup> Whether or not Tallien's defense aided in the acquittal of Rossignol is debateable. The general was acquitted, however, and Tallien began to assume a larger role in the affairs of the Convention.

That his prestige was increasing is evident by events of the week before Rossignol's trial. Three days before Tallien's statements

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of May 6, 1793; Réimp. Moniteur, XVI, 33.

<sup>2</sup>Speech of August 26, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXIII, 45. See also ibid., 127, 137.

(August 23), he received a new mission, this time to the departments of Lot-et-Garonne, Dordogne, and the Gironde.<sup>1</sup> Ostensibly, he was to recruit men for the new levée en masse. Actually, however, he was sent to repress the federalist riots in these areas. He had demonstrated enough zeal in the other areas to which he had been sent to merit this mission. Meeting with eight other deputies on mission at Agen, a city in Lot-et-Garonne, Tallien agreed with them that the rebellious city of Bordeaux had to obey the national government. To enforce this obedience, the dual policy of starving the Bordelais while infiltrating the citizenry with men of Jacobin persuasion was agreed upon.

Before he entered the city, however, it was necessary to destroy all the vestiges of the ancien regime in the surrounding areas. Chateaux, paintings, everything which smacked of the aristocratic old order was expunged from the hands of the traitors. At both Agen and La Réole, a town to the southeast of Bordeaux, administrations were changed as the aristocrats were eliminated. In spite of this preoccupation, there was one overwhelming passion which Tallien pursued with great zeal, the persecution of escaped Girondins who had managed to reach the Gironde or its neighborhood. Before Tallien had even entered the port city, he had trapped three moderates, Gaspard Duchatel, a former secretary of Brissot, Joseph Marchena and Honoré Riouffe, all Girondin sympathizers.<sup>2</sup> After their capture, Tallien sent them before the revolutionary

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<sup>1</sup>J.B. Duvergier, Collection Complete des Lois, Décrets, Ordonnances, Reglemens, avis du Conseil-d'Etat (30 volumes, Paris, 1834-1838), second ed., VI, 108.

<sup>2</sup>For a brief account of the lives of these men see Biographie Universelle, Ancienne et Moderne, (85 volumes, Paris, 1811-1862), XII, 105, LXXIII, 71; and XXXVIII, 124-125.

tribunal where they were tried.<sup>1</sup> Duchatel was condemned to death. The other two received prison sentences, but were set free after the fall of Robespierre.

On September 10, Tallien and his main associate at Bordeaux, C.-Alexandre Ysabeau,<sup>2</sup> received from the Committee of Public Safety, one million livres to cover the expenses of their mission to Bordeaux.<sup>3</sup> It was due to this Committee and its energetic involvement with the rebellious Gironde that the actual penetration of the city could take place. After more than a month of 'proper allocation of these funds,' to pay infiltrators and trouble-makers, coupled with effective planning by the deputies themselves, the complete submission of the Bordelais was assured. Tallien entered a vanquished city on October 16, 1793 as the representative of the Terror government.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, October 11, 1793; F.-A. Aulard, Recueil des Actes du Comité de Salut Public avec la correspondance officielle des Représentants en Mission et le Registre du conseil exécutif provisoire, 1792-1795, (28 volumes, Paris, 1892-1951), VII, 308.

<sup>2</sup>Claude-Alexandre Ysabeau was born thirty-five years, to the day, before the raid on the Bastille. A member of the Society of Oratorians, he became a prefect of the Vendome military college in 1785. After endorsing the Civil Code of the clergy in 1791, he became constitutional cure of St.-Martin, and later aided the archbishop of Tours. Ysabeau represented the district of Indre-et-Loire at the Convention, and served ably in the legislature on the committee of petitions and correspondence. A Jacobin, he voted for the death of the King. He was sent out several times as a deputy on mission but, as Tallien, is best remembered for his actions at Bordeaux. On October 16, he entered Bordeaux, but appears to have played a minimal role in the governing of the city while Tallien was there.

<sup>3</sup>Decree of the Committee of Public Safety, September 10, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VII, 395-396.

CHAPTER II  
EVENTS IN BORDEAUX (1790-1793) BEFORE  
THE ARRIVAL OF TALLIEN

The Bordeaux to which Tallien came in October of 1793 had undergone considerable change in its municipal structure during the three preceding years. In 1790 the city was divided into twenty-eight sections which requested permission to meet in a general assembly.<sup>1</sup> This wish of the sectionnels was denied, but these unauthorized meetings continued and grew in importance. By November 1791, the minutes of the twenty-eight sectional meetings were regarded as barometers of local opinion. Until August 10, 1792 this plan of unofficial meeting was grudgingly accepted by the local authorities. On this date, however, the French monarchy fell and the municipal authorities were unable to prevent the sections from declaring themselves en permanence.<sup>2</sup> Though their objectives and presumably their methods were identical they often failed to agree on matters of policy and procedure. This was most apparent in the later course of events.

To appreciate the climate of opinion which prevailed at Tallien's appearance a discussion of the political struggles of the period is in order. The failure of the Girondin ministry to carry on the war

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<sup>1</sup>See Journal de Bordeaux, II, No. 238, November 16, 1790; cited in Richard Munthe Brace, Bordeaux and the Gironde, 1789-1794 (Ithaca, 1947), 173.

<sup>2</sup>Camille Jullian, Histoire de Bordeaux depuis les Origines jusqu'en 1895 (Bordeaux, 1895), 658.

successfully had convinced the Jacobins that a more aggressive leadership was necessary if the nation was to survive. By April of 1793 any statement of policy which the moderate Girondins might have introduced to the Convention was doomed before it started. There was total disagreement between members of both parties on matters of domestic and foreign policy. Finally by a coup d'état of May 31, the Girondin delegates were expelled from the Convention, leaving that body under the control of the Jacobin leaders.

In an effort to subject the provinces to a stricter control the Jacobins sent out deputies on mission. On March 16, Percin Mazade, the first of several deputies assigned to Bordeaux, arrived there demanding recruits in response to the levée of the Convention two weeks before.<sup>1</sup> He ordered that two battalions of fifteen hundred men each be sent to the Vendee. This request was granted without hesitation, and the troops were sent to La Rochelle, the assembly point, by the 20th. Shortly thereafter, two more Jacobins, Pierre-Paganel and Pierre-Anselm Garrau, followed Mazade to Bordeaux. Their mission was to secure Bordeaux against English invasion by introducing Jacobin ideals to the people of the city, spying on the populace, observing suspects and, most important, by establishing a permanent committee of public safety in the area.<sup>2</sup> At the end of their first week they reported to the Convention that aristocrats were being harbored in Bordeaux. Little

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 671.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 671. On the question of this committee of public safety, the department desired an independent committee completely out of the hands of Paris. This was contrary to the centralized rule which the Jacobins intended to establish. Both Saige, the Mayor, and Sers, the President of the municipal council, agreed on having an autonomous committee.

more was stated in regard to the revolutionary beliefs of the city, but it was urged at this time that the counter-revolutionaries be eliminated through "reforms."

Though the Bordelais were beginning to resent the Jacobin infiltration, they still supported the Republic. On April 10, in fact, the city instituted a committee of surveillance which ultimately approved all revolutionary measures undertaken by the Gironde.<sup>1</sup> This seems sufficient proof that the Bordelais were not yet opposed to aiding the nation.

The event which destroyed the loyalty to the central government came in the form of the written word. A letter, allegedly written as Jacobin propaganda, was seized by the Bordelais authorities. This document exposed in great detail the plan for an assassination of the Girondin delegates to the Convention. Immediately denounced by Saige, the Mayor of Bordeaux, the note stirred up great resentment in the city. The Convention was openly contemptuous of the opinion of the Gironde, and refused to listen to the Mayor's letter of protest. Aware now that their influence was slight in Parisian circles, the Bordelais became more receptive to the ideas of the counter-revolutionists. The Convention had, moreover, outraged the Bordelais by neglecting to provision them with grain and by failing to break through the English blockade. All of these factors contributed to the insurrectionary movement.

In the early days of May 1793 Tallien made one of his periodic trips to the capital. At this time Parisian Jacobin circles rejoiced in the fact that the Girondin deputies were under attack by the mobs,

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<sup>1</sup>Aurélien Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur à Bordeaux (2 volumes, Bordeaux, 1877), I, 171.

the liberal press, and other Convention delegates. The Girondins appealed in vain to their constituents for support against the popular demagogues. The eloquent Vergniaud wrote to his electors on May 4: "Brothers and friends, you have been told of the horrible persecution against us, and you have abandoned us.... What is our crime? .... It is to have wanted to conserve your properties and to protect you from the tyranny of Marat or those men of whom he is only a mannequin...."<sup>1</sup>

On the following day Vergniaud called for a rebellion: "Men of the Gironde, rise up," he began. "The Convention has ... been feeble because it has been abandoned. Sustain it," he pleaded, "... force those men who provoke war to maintain peace. Your example will be followed by other departments...."<sup>2</sup> The people, he continued, must not remain apathetic in respect to this call. Printed and distributed in the sections of Bordeaux and the popular societies of the Gironde, this letter had a great effect on the populace. A committee of subsistences was created on May 8 which immediately begged the Convention not be fall prey to the influence of the Paris Commune or the Montagnards who dominated the assembly.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that the Girondins were held in high esteem by this committee for they saw in their delegates "the representatives of the entire nation."<sup>4</sup> In closing, the committee stated flatly that the national representation was not free.

At the Convention the Jacobins read the letter with rage, and replied by accusing the Girondins of wishing to divorce the department

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in *ibid.*, 215.

<sup>2</sup>Cited in *ibid.*, 215-216.

<sup>3</sup>The committee of subsistences was to endure for three years, rendering inestimable services in the commandeering of materiel for the populace.

<sup>4</sup>Cited in P.-J. O'Reilly, Histoire Complète de Bordeaux (6 volumes, Bordeaux, 1863) I, 2, 282-283.

from France in order to unite it with England. Bordeaux, the Jacobins claimed, was about to be sold to the British.<sup>1</sup> This last charge was so outrageous that the Bordelais did not even deign to reply but instead kept a focus on the paramount issue, the question of the Convention's freedom. On May 9, in a letter to the Convention, they swore that if atrocities were committed against their duly elected representatives, they would take up arms in their defense. These words meant civil war. They announced that "... , if a decree granting amnesty [to our deputies] does not stop us first, we will hurl our national guard against Paris.... We swear to save our brothers, or to perish on their tombs," they concluded.<sup>2</sup>

To allay the fears of the Bordelais, Pache, the Mayor of Paris, swore that the Girondin deputies were in no physical danger; only their ideas were suspect. Though it seemed that official Paris had no intention of assassinating the deputies, the Bordelais continued to take measures leading to open rebellion.<sup>3</sup> It was felt that the Paris assembly had destroyed liberty of opinion. Several official groups in the Gironde, therefore, were requested to advise means of restoring this freedom.<sup>4</sup> This commission later became the Commission Populaire de Salut Public de la Gironde.

With this known in the capital, the Jacobins on May 28 urged the mobs of Paris to exert pressure on the Convention to force the Girondins

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<sup>1</sup>Actually both stories appear to be nothing more than fables designed to create suspicion among the Bordelais. No document alludes to the validity of these tales, and it can only be surmised that they were made in the hope of winning support from the federalists. See Jullian, Histoire de Bordeaux, 668-669.

<sup>2</sup>Cited in Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, I, 219.

<sup>3</sup>Wilfred B. Kerr, The Reign of Terror, 1793-1794 (Toronto, 1937), 98.

<sup>4</sup>The commission was composed of deputies from the Commune of Bordeaux and the General Council of the Gironde.



from this body.<sup>1</sup> The Paris Commune, together with the section leaders, pressed the issue to a head by approving a petition which had this demand as its main point. On the following day a hesitant Convention received the bill and, in a tumultuous session, passed it. By the time the smoke had cleared on June 2, twenty-two Girondin leaders had been placed under house arrest, several of whom (Grangeneuve, Birotteau, Gaudet, and Barbaroux), were to occupy much of Tallien's time in Bordeaux.

This news of Girondin expulsion reached Bordeaux on June 5. That very day the popular societies declared themselves "in insurrection against the ... Paris Commune and ... the faction which subjugated the national representation."<sup>2</sup> For the first time in French history France had separated itself from Paris.<sup>3</sup> Before long, news of the insurrection had reached all corners of France, and promises of aid poured into Bordeaux from the other departments.<sup>4</sup> These expressions of support gave new confidence to the instigators of the movement. As riots occurred in the outlying districts of the country, the Parisian administration decided that compulsion was a better answer to the revolt than persuasion.

The Gironde continued to motion threateningly towards Paris. Through the recently established Commission Populaire, it now ordered a complete overhaul of all weapons in the area, reorganized the national guard and, as a last measure to demonstrate defiance against the recent

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<sup>1</sup>Brace, Bordeaux and the Gironde, 188.

<sup>2</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, I, 225.

<sup>3</sup>Thompson, Robespierre, 347.

<sup>4</sup>Bernadau puts the number at sixty-eight, while Kerr puts it "at about sixty." In any case, it is clear that over two-thirds of France supported the initial insurrection. See M. Bernadau, Histoire de Bordeaux (Bordeaux, 1839), 171, and Kerr, Reign of Terror, 100.

action of Paris, spoke menacingly of marching eight hundred strong against the Paris radicals.<sup>1</sup> As a further indication of its resentment towards the Convention, the Commission fired a note off to this body on June 11. Exclaiming among other things that all the departments were in common accord to defend the national representation, the letter went on to say that the departments desired "to render it free and to rescue it from ... degradation ...."<sup>2</sup> Though unity was strong in the departments at the inception of this rebellion, it did not last long.

Before the Commission Populaire had actually consolidated its position, however, deputies from the Convention were dispatched to soothe the angry Bordelais. The first two, Pierre Ichon and Pierre Dartigoyte, were unceremoniously thrown into prison.<sup>3</sup> The pretext for their arrest was non-fulfillment of the law of March 21 which had established committees in each of the sectional communes of France whose function was to examine foreigners.<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, these arrests were well received by public opinion.

In spite of all the measures being taken by the Bordelais administration--the formation of a departmental army and the raising of 1200 troops rather than 800--secession from the Republic was not seriously considered by any of the insurrectionists. All that these people desired was a maintenance of the legally constituted national representation.

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<sup>1</sup>These patriots included men from the Gironde as well as disgruntled citizens from other departments.

<sup>2</sup>Cited in Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, I, 238.

<sup>3</sup>Paris had incarcerated deputies from the Gironde and Bordeaux merely returned the compliment.

<sup>4</sup>Duvergier, Décrets et Lois, V, 206-207. By classifying these representatives as foreigners (étrangers), the Bordelais could not help but insult the National Convention.

In Paris meanwhile, the Jacobins sensed the rising cloud of discontent in the Gironde and sent two more deputies, Jean-Baptiste Mathieu and Jean-Baptiste Trielhard, to Bordeaux. Armed with instructions to avert hostilities at any cost, the two men arrived on June 24, only to be treated discourteously by their republican brothers.<sup>1</sup> They had requested a single sentinel at their door "as honor due them as representatives of the people," and were disturbed and suspicious to be guarded twenty-four hours a day like common criminals. The two, nevertheless, spoke of appealing to reason, and of expressing the character of true republicans to the Commission.<sup>2</sup>

At a meeting with the Commission members, the representatives were told defiantly that the Gironde could not recognize the existing rump Convention. Since the truly elected body, the full Convention, had ceased to operate after the purge of May 29-June 2, all acts emanating from it since that date were null and void. And, they further exclaimed to the two delegates, "what now exists is the complicity of all treasons." The Girondin plan was "to march on Paris, not to destroy the Convention, but to render it free, and to punish those who had brought it harm."<sup>3</sup> These words were remarkably misunderstood by the deputies, for their only impression of the tongue-lashing they received was that the Bordelais were deceived by the actions of May 31.<sup>4</sup> In any case, the deputies were ejected from the city and the Convention still took no steps to overcome the insurgents of Bordeaux.

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<sup>1</sup>Jullian, Histoire de Bordeaux, 673. They were constantly observed from the time of their arrival to their departure three days later.

<sup>2</sup>Aulard, Receuil des Actes, V, 82.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in O'Reilly, Histoire de Bordeaux, I, 2, 316-318.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 318-319.

Throughout July and the first week of August 1793, the situation between the Gironde and the Parisian Jacobins remained static. Both the representatives on mission and the Commission Populaire experienced difficulties in their respective operations. The expeditionary force which was to march on Paris could not be raised, and though the deputies had apparently stymied movements of whatever troops there were, they too had not been wholly successful.

On July 26, both Mathieu and Trielhard were relieved of their commands and replaced by a man who, like Tallien, was renowned for his terroristic activities. The man was Marc-Antoine Baudot<sup>1</sup> and, in his first letter to the Committee of Public Safety from this area, he displayed the harsh temperament which was to show itself more fully in little more than a month. "If necessary," he declared then, "I assure the National Convention that, if the Bordelais are daring enough to march, I ... assure [you] that they will not pass ... the town of Limoges [from where he wrote], and will be dispersed and anesthetized while approaching."<sup>2</sup> Officials from Paris had seen the situation and, through words like that of Baudot, were endeavoring to halt it.

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<sup>1</sup>Marc-Antoine Baudot was born in 1765 and, at the convoking of the Estates-General, was practicing medicine at Charolles. He was sent to the Legislative Assembly as an alternate deputy, but was later sent to the Convention as a full deputy from Saone'et'Loire. Baudot, like most of the Jacobins, voted for the death of Louis and against the idea of reprieve. On April 12, 1793 he was sent on mission to the Pyrenees where he remained through October occupying himself with the poorly equipped army. On July 26, he was sent to the city of Montauban, where he reconstituted the administration by exposing all anti-government factions. In August, he met with C.-A. Ysabeau to enforce the August 6 decree directive outlawing the Commission Populaire in Bordeaux. On August 19, they both entered this city only to be unceremoniously asked to leave. He then travelled over the department of the Gironde as a "trouble-shooter," and did not come into contact again with Bordeaux until October 16.

<sup>2</sup>Aulard, Receuil des Actes, V, 434.

Unaware of the change in departmental administration, the Commission Populaire continued to urge recruits for the departmental army, but the recovery of the local Jacobin clubs from the initial shock of Girondin success, together with the strength which the Convention was beginning to manifest, destroyed the remaining zeal in the federalist strongholds. Even some of the Bordeaux sections had become disillusioned with the Commission.<sup>1</sup> Among the recruits themselves discouragement became so great that in the Gironde's entire national guard only sixteen men enrolled of their own volition. Added to these problems, the Commission faced a still greater one when the neighboring departments reneged on their promises of aid to the insurrection.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Commission had taken the first steps in the federal rebellion against the Convention and had borrowed more than 350,000 piastres from the mint to finance the armed expedition, it had assumed a unity which, in fact, did not exist. On August 2, it stood alone "destined to carry the burden of the communal faults, and the anger of the triumphant Jacobins."<sup>3</sup> On this date the Commission Populaire abdicated its functions and the last resistance to the terror in Bordeaux was eliminated.

While the Commission was committing suicide the Convention, now confident of its strength, determined to wipe out the federalist insurrection. On July 23, it decreed that transients, not domiciled in

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<sup>1</sup>As recently as July 12, Treilhard and Matheiu had written that the district of Cadillac had declared adherence to the Convention and had unequivocally embraced the new Constitution. See *ibid.*, V, n. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Few of these departments persisted in their resolutions once it became obvious that the Convention could utilize troops freed from action in the Vendee against them.

<sup>3</sup>O'Reilly, Histoire de Bordeaux, I, 2, 323.

Lyon, Bordeaux, Caen, and Marseilles (the federalist centers) were to leave these cities within twenty-four hours or risk the consequences of being declared émigrés.<sup>1</sup> On August 6, the Paris government declared that the defunct Commission, its members, promoters, and leaders, were to be placed outside the law.<sup>2</sup> Its decisions were nullified, its members' property was sequestered in favor of the state, and the former public representatives of Bordeaux were, by decree of the Convention, held responsible for the 350,000 piastres taken from the departmental bank.<sup>3</sup>

It was at this stage that representatives were dispatched to Bordeaux to enforce the decree of August 6. As has already been observed, Jean-Lambert Tallien was one of these emissaries from Paris. But before he or his colleagues reached Bordeaux, professional trouble-makers were sent there by the Convention to stir up unrest, and to prepare the city for the Conventionnels. As a further precaution, steps were taken to prevent flour and grain from reaching the city. By these methods the Convention proposed to divide public opinion and use this division to destroy the federalist unity forever.

The deputies, operating through the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety soon realized that their mission to Bordeaux alone would not settle the rebellion in the southwest. Simultaneously, it was obvious to the Parisian bodies that they must stamp out the trouble without delay or risk another Vendée here. As has been shown, this problem was solved by administering political pressure and by economic restrictions on the populace. This policy was made particularly

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<sup>1</sup>Duvergier, Décrets et Lois, VI, 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>3</sup>Brace, Bordeaux and the Gironde, 210.

successful in Bordeaux. The dissolution of the Commission had made the deputies on mission aware that resistance might be permanently checked. Coupled with this was the belief that if the Bordelais were hungry enough, they would all the more readily acquiesce to republican demands. The representatives would thus be capable of enforcing the August 6 decree on the hungry citizens of Bordeaux.

Now that the Commission had died of its own hand, the formerly suppressed radical groups began to make their appearance. The Club du Café National (outlawed since the previous March), the section Franklin, the most radical of the Bordeaux sections, and the Jacobin club were all revived. In contrast to the regeneration of these radical groups, a club was also established for the younger members of the community by which they might counter the forces of the Mountain. This was the Société Populaire de la Jeunesse Bordelais.

All of these groups were functioning when, on August 10, news of the decision made four days earlier in Paris reached Bordeaux. The information that members of the former Commission had been declared by a Convention decree to be outside the law, and were to be punished, was unfavorably received by the Bordelais. Observing this, the deputies, now at La Reole thirty miles to the southeast of Bordeaux, deliberated on the means which they would use to suppress the Bordelais. After some hesitation, they agreed that famine and force would be the tools of subjection.<sup>1</sup> As a starting gesture, Jacobins gradually infiltrated

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<sup>1</sup>Registers of the district attest that the deputies had most of the goods destined for Bordeaux interrupted en voyage with the result being that from August 15 each inhabitant was reduced to seven ounces of bread a day. H. Chaumat, Barrau de Bordeaux, cited in Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, I, 298.

the body politic of Bordeaux confidently expecting the Convention to soon control the city.

Nevertheless the Bordelais refused to submit. Appealing dramatically to their French brothers for aid, they asked if "the French [had] lost all human sentiment? No, we will find someone who will come to our aid.... Citizens," they pleaded, "send us bread, 120,000 souls are within our walls...; help us, do not reduce us to desperation."<sup>1</sup>

The Convention, seeking to halt the rebellion, dispatched C.-Alexandre Ysabeau and Marc-Antoine Baudot to the metropolis. To compel acceptance of the August 6 decree they arrived in Bordeaux on August 19, stayed there for three days and, if we are to believe their reports, barely escaped with their lives when they did go.<sup>2</sup> On August 22, they reached their base of operations, La Réole, and reported to the Convention that foreigners had instigated the Bordelais (true Frenchmen would not hinder the forces of law and order, so the two professed to believe), and this criminal foreign element was bent upon casting asunder all bonds uniting Bordeaux to the Republic. The following day, the two deputies issued another statement to the Convention explaining that although many loyalists were in Bordeaux, they were accompanied by "chevaliers du poignards" along with royalists who must be silenced.<sup>3</sup> These royalists, they continued, were totally unhindered and unmolested by the existing administration which, incidentally, was engaged in attacking the section Franklin for its Jacobin outlook. Moreover, the representatives declared

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<sup>1</sup>Fonds Vivie, N. 229; Brace, Bordeaux and the Gironde, 214.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the Convention received August 26, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VI, 122-125.

<sup>3</sup>A.M.B.-Coll. Fonds Vivie, No. 230; cited in Brace, Bordeaux and the Gironde, 222.



that "we have exhausted the means of instruction...; we will employ the means of force."<sup>1</sup> Implicit in this call to violence was the apparent futility of the prevailing policy of conciliation. Mediation and "instruction" had both been examined and found wanting. Only brute strength remained to resolve the existing differences between the Conventionnels and the Bordelais.<sup>2</sup>

The policy of repression had not yet been implemented for the deputies still held out the promise of subsistences.<sup>3</sup> But the Bordelais would have to accept the edicts of the Convention which now included a ban on the Societe de la Jeunesse. This group was seen by the deputies as the only remaining organized opposition in the city. Although aid would be forthcoming to the city if the representatives' overtures were adhered to, no reference was made to the granting of confidence to the municipal government.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Convention, August 22, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXV, 66-68. The whole episode of August 19-21 is exposed by the two deputies. They state that they were only doing their duty, but the Bordelais "scoundrels" refused to honor their requests which were made in pursuance of the National Convention's directives.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Saige to the Convention, September 9, 1793; ibid., LXXV, 68-69. Saige here refutes all of the above letter (n. 1, above), and asserts that the decree of August 6 was promulgated four days after the Commission Populaire had ceased to exist. As a result, he claimed, the Paris edict was proclaimed under false pretenses. In fact, he infers, the courier carrying the dissolution news to Paris had been intercepted by Jacobins, and this is why the message never reached the capital.

<sup>3</sup>Accordingly sections Franklin, Républicaine, Liberté, Beaurépaire, Rousseau, and Amis de Tous (all radical Jacobin strongholds), were asked by the deputies to name three committeemen each to observe the subsistence problem, and to see whether or not a projected two million franc loan from the Convention could be used. These sections were also to list all those who opposed national directives at any time. A crude system of surveillance, wholly dependent on bread, was thus established.

This demand of the deputies was accepted only by the section Franklin. Though this section lacked true municipal strength, being but one twenty-eighth of the city, it urged the Jacobin plan upon the other sections. At what specific moment it was decided by these sectionnels to incite insurrection is unclear. As recently as the previous April though, Franklin had suggested the overthrow of the municipal government, but nothing had come of this plan. By September, however, it seemed evident with the food shortage and the generally poor conditions in the city, that the municipal structure would be overthrown and, despite vigorous protestations on its part, the Société de la Jeunesse would also be forcibly dissolved.<sup>1</sup> On September 8, in fact, the Societe had been denounced to the authorities and, the next day, Franklin issued an ultimatum to the administrative corps. Saige, completely distressed, appealed to the Convention to halt the actions of Franklin in its "speaking so menacingly, so imperatively," in its claim of sole executor of the August 6 decree in Bordeaux.<sup>2</sup> He wrote with good reason, he thought, that civil war must be avoided at all costs. If a change in the government was desired by a majority of the Bordelais, he added, then and only then would the officially constituted authorities relinquish their posts. His appeal fell on deaf ears.

On September 20, The Club du Café National was officially reopened with two important new members, Ysabeau and Baudot. On the following day Franklin openly rebelled. Speedily dispatching agents to La Réole

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from the Societe to the Bordelais, September 7, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXV, 70. The Societe denounced the Jacobins and their policies. Claiming that they "might be misled, but never compromised" in their actions, the Societe added, "we are not enemies of the nation, nor anarchists, nor do we wish to subvert laws, or disturb the peace and tranquillity" of Bordeaux.

<sup>2</sup>See reference in n. 2, p. 23.

and Perigueux, where Tallien had recently arrived, the section humbly requested the deputies to revisit Bordeaux and to accomplish the duties with which they had been charged by the Convention. Four days later, Franklin suggested, possibly with the deputies' foreknowledge and approval, that a new municipal government be created. It was to be composed of two deputies from each section once the old municipality had been deposed. Defiantly stating that the "sovereign will" of the people had directed it to assume the reins of government, then taking this honor, Franklin requested the city government of Saige to immediately cede the authority which it no longer was capable of handling. By September 18, the insurrection initiated and led by Franklin was a fait accompli. The news was sent to La Reole and Perigueux, while Bertrand, a former clockmaker, was chosen Mayor.

The reaction to the rebellion by the deputies was indeed strange. Then at Agen, they received a letter in which the events of the September 18 insurrection were recapitulated; the usual avowal of attachment to the Republic given (one and indivisible); and all due respect to laws, people, and property of the republic prominently mentioned. Simultaneously, recognition of the Bordeaux action was requested in the following words: "Come to us, ..., second our efforts, assure your-  
selves by our truly republican sentiments...." At the conclusion of this memorandum, almost inconspicuous in its placing, there was an entreaty for the relaxation of the food barrier; the dearth of grain had never been worse.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the deputies at Agen, September 18, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXV, 315. Italics mine.

Despite the sworn devotion to the Republic, Tallien and the others saw in the insurrection only a Bordelais device for obtaining subsistences. Consequently, the day following the uprising and the receipt of the letter at Agen, there was a blistering reply which pointedly enumerated the failings of the new body. Not only had it maintained the old principles, but not even one reference had been made in regard to the August 6 decree.<sup>1</sup> Until this injunction was accepted, how could Bordeaux even claim to have respect for the law? As for the matter of subsistences, the deputies could only believe that the "solicitude of the municipality" in regard to subsistences was authentic "when domiciliary visits were scrupulously made in the presence of the people's commissaires, sans-culottes, chosen by the section Franklin." Belief in tranquillity? Only when the youth had gone to the frontiers, money stolen from the treasury had been restored (an obvious reference to the 350,000 piastres), vengeance had been meted out to all rebels and emigres, when English, Spanish, and Dutch had been expelled from the city, and "all outlawed members of the Convention, hiding or seeking refuge, had been remitted to the Convention," then would tranquillity be recognized. Once these conditions had been complied with, the deputies would allow foodstuffs to enter the beleaguered city.<sup>2</sup> Until then, they "would seriously occupy themselves" with the amelioration of the difficulties.

Implicit in this reply is a powerful fear of the Bordelais, and a conscious desire to "play" the conqueror's role when access was finally gained into the city. The deputies did not wish to risk the

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix number I.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from the deputies to the provisional government in Bordeaux, September 19, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXV, 316.

ridicule and abuse that Ysabeau and Baudot had encountered a month earlier. They demanded the respect due to a representative of the French nation who was performing his duty. If withholding subsistences was the only answer, then the deputies certainly would be able to prove their strength. In short, until they were absolutely positive of the Bordelais acceptance of the national policies the representatives on mission were not going to enter Bordeaux.

To the Montagnards in Paris, all the news of occurrences in the departments was of great interest; there the revolution would be won or lost! Receiving a report from the representatives to the Bordeaux area on September 18, the mother Jacobin Society requested that a summary of this report be read to it by Desfieux, a member. The representatives were in La Reole, he told them. There, they had been contacted by Bordelais representatives in order to help organize a new administration of this city as rapidly as possible. The old municipality had been destroyed, and the new government, seeking to prove its revolutionary ardor, had already arrested three hundred "malelovents" as suspects. A committee of surveillance had also been established. Though more guilty criminals had been arrested, they had not yet been punished.<sup>1</sup>

While Paris was concerned primarily with the long-term problems, the major difficulties which the Bordelais now faced were three: (1) to regenerate Parisian confidence in them; (2) to eliminate all cliques which might oppose the Jacobins; and (3) most important perhaps, to have a food convoy reach them. It was very likely that if problems (1) and (2) could be solved the third would also be settled. Steps were

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<sup>1</sup>Réimp. Moniteur, XVII, 762.

immediately taken to ensure a re-evaluation of republican sentiment. On September 20, two days after the rebellion, a deputation from the new government was heard at the Convention. "True republicans had triumphed," they began, "conspirators and the [former] administrative corps ... had been arrested; the decree of August 6 is executed, and the youth was leaving immediately for the frontiers."<sup>1</sup> The feelings expressed here were similarly attested to in an open letter to the Bordelais.<sup>2</sup> Both proclamations were signed by the new Mayor of Bordeaux, Bertrand.

In support of this sentiment, a letter arrived in Paris addressed to the sans-culottes who were more organized and in tune with current events than their backward provincial brothers. In this note, we find the tone of a people just liberated, but one cannot help feeling that it is a tone more of false humility than of a sincere revolutionary love of Paris and its doctrines. The Bordelais having been misled, had now seen their errors, and earnestly hoped that the Parisians would accept their desire for reconciliation:

Citizens of Paris, our friends, brothers, the Bordelais, good sans-culottes, are always worthy of your confidence and friendship; they understand all the sacrifices you have made for the Revolution; .... Continue, brave brothers in arms, to repulse enterprises which would bring harm; and if you need forces speak, as 10,000 arms [will] fly to your aid.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Speech made at the Convention, September 20, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXV, 243.

<sup>2</sup>This letter was also presented for the edification of the Convention. The document demonstrated that all the laws of the Convention were being executed, including the controversial edict of August 6. All those people implicated by the decree were to be arrested, seals were ordered placed on all their property, and domiciliary arrests were advised.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to the Parisian sans-culottes, September 21, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXV, 244.

After the reading of this letter to the Convention, Cambon, its President, remarked with satisfaction that true principles had finally triumphed in Bordeaux. This really was no surprise to the Convention because it knew full well that principles would be the "rallying point" for the sans-culottes.<sup>1</sup>

Although this recantation was accepted at Paris without question, it remained to be seen whether such humility would be accepted by the men who had the final word in regard to the populace of this city. What was the reaction of these deputies? Baudot, Chaudron-Roussau,<sup>2</sup> Ysabeau, and Tallien, the major deputies in the area, all agreed that only the matter of subsistences had caused the Bordelais to rebel. Continuing their haughty demeanor towards the insurrection, they promised not to enter the city until all distinguishing marks of the counter-rebellion had ceased to exist. It is interesting to note here that these remarks by the deputies on mission only served to remove any lagging spirit which the newly chosen city government might have harbored. Bordeaux was starving, except for the section Franklin which

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<sup>1</sup>Hérault de Séchelles, member of the Committee of Public Safety, made a complete report of the Bordeaux situation beginning with the dissolution of the Commission on August 2. This can be read in Réimp. Moniteur, XVII, 760, 763, 764. See also Archives Parlementaires, LXXV, 272, for what other journals of the day, the Mercure universel and the L'Auditeur national, said of the deputies from Bordeaux.

<sup>2</sup>Guillaume Chaudron-Roussau was born in 1752 and, until the Revolution, was a farmer. With the outbreak of hostilities he became a representative from the Haute-Marne, both to the Legislative Assembly and the Convention. He voted for Louis' death, and against the reprieve. After several missions, he was sent with Baudot to Bordeaux which he entered on October 16, 1793. Once there he remained but a few days, and then left with Baudot for Paris.

had solidly cemented relations between itself and the deputies.<sup>1</sup>

Anything to accomodate the acquisition of foodstuffs might be attempted by the famine stricken Bordelais.

Of interest too is their apparent disregard of policies proclaimed by the Paris legislators. Even at this date, three months before the Constitution of 14 Frimaire (December 4), the deputies were opposing national edicts. Bordeaux, for the deputy to the Gironde, was to be a closed city until he, and not Paris was satisfied that its repentance was sincere.

It is not certain that national conditions improved enough to foster a change in the attitude of the deputies. To be sure, there was news that the war had taken a turn for the better, the Vendée crisis had been eased, and some stabilization had been given the assignat by the Terror regime.<sup>2</sup> In any case, the deputies in the

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Marie Prudhomme, Histoire Générale et Impartiale des Erreurs, des Fautes, et des Crimes Commis pendant la Revolution française 6 volumes (Paris, 1797), V, 433. Prudhomme believes that Franklin enjoyed enough of a preference with the deputies, and had enough artillery, to start a civil war. This, however, is unsubstantiated.

<sup>2</sup>By the fifth day of September, 1793, with both the shortage of food in Paris and the mobs urging the Convention, this body was forced to declare "terror" the order of the day. It was through this pressure that the Committee of Public Safety held its position. The revolutionary tribunal was reorganized; committees of surveillance were directed to prepare, each in its own district, a list of suspects, while warrants were issued against them. Known terrorists were appointed to the Committee of General Security; and the Jacobin clubs, by September 13, were incorporated into the governmental system. They too were to denounce all suspects and unworthy officials, and to "articulate the voice of the sovereign people" whom they represented. On September 29, the law establishing the maximum was passed, and prices were set on forty commodities of prime necessity. Thus the economic Terror was added to the political Terror. See Leo Gershoy, The French Revolution and Napoleon (New York, 1941), 263-278. The purpose of the Terror was obviously to paralyze members of the suspect classes and to prevent them from making fresh attempts against the Republic, as well as to



Gironde adopted a new policy in regard to the Bordeaux. Baudot wrote to the Convention on the last day of September that he and the other deputies were going to converge upon Bordeaux with an army of ten thousand men.<sup>1</sup> Where he intended to obtain such a large force was not stated. Where once the deputies had maintained that they would not enter the city until positively sure of its revolutionary ardor, there was now little vacillation, according to Baudot, as to policy. The revolution in Bordeaux had been successful, he believed, and the deputies had managed to secure the citadels of Blaye and Royan plus ports at the base of the Gironde. Things were so well accomplished, in fact, that any members of the former Commission who still operated had little or no chance of making effective resistance.<sup>2</sup> Arrests, he continued, were occurring frequently, and all of this news should be brought to the attention of the delegates at the Convention.

It is significant that some deputies in the vicinity of Bordeaux believed conditions had improved to such an extent that a plan for the

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exact vengeance for the lives of patriots sacrificed to royalist and federalist treason. Before this point is dropped, it should not be forgotten that the Terror was not a new device in September. As R. R. Palmer (Twelve Who Ruled, 55) states: "The Terror was an endemic condition, and by September four hundred had already been executed. The difference lies in the fact that the Terror now had an organization where before it did not. It became a policy of the government which ruled a France torn by violence, suspicion, doubt, and fear." For an excellent general study of the Terror and the issues surrounding it, see the study made by James M. Thompson, The French Revolution (New York, 1945), 391-451.

<sup>1</sup>Earlier in the month, says Prudhomme, Baudot and Ysabeau had organized an army of 2,000 men, all peasants, from the surrounding area, and all stimulated by the hope of pillage. Prudhomme, Histoire Générale et Impartiale, V, 432.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the Convention, no date, but it appears to have been written the last week of September, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VII, 67.

invasion of the city could actually be contemplated. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Committee of Public Safety meeting since April 1793 had, on September 10, formulated a specific policy which permitted the satisfactory results reported by Baudot. It was emphasized in September that the laws of the Convention must be executed - the means of instituting this execution was naively left to the deputies. In the dispatch sent to the representatives it was demanded that the citizenry submit to the national authority personified by the deputy. Too much laxness and disrespect had been shown. Moreover, following an authorization from the War Minister, General Brune was to go to the Gironde, ostensibly to raise the levée, but actually to aid the representatives in the subjection of the Bordelais. He would meet Tallien and Ysabeau, then go to the citadels of Blaye and Royan, and assure the defense of these forts.<sup>1</sup> The Committee also decreed that equipment for 4,000 men should be transferred to La Réole. The sum of one million (livres) was given to the deputies to dispose of as they saw fit, and Brune was given an additional 300,000 livres accountable to the Committee.<sup>2</sup> The time for direct action had arrived.

When conditions are examined for the failure of the Bordelais to hold firm to their anti-Convention attitude, it must be considered that throughout the entire month of September, indeed through the

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<sup>1</sup>Duvergier, Lois et Décrets, VI, 107-108. By this edict, Tallien and the other deputies later sent to the Gironde were given the power to enforce the laws "against the enemies of the interior, and administrators who have conspired against the sovereignty of the people and the indivisibility of the Republic," besides taking all the measures necessary for public safety.

<sup>2</sup>Decree of the Committee of Public Safety. September 10, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, 395-396.

remainder of the year, there was a grave shortage of subsistences in Bordeaux.<sup>1</sup> It is apparent then that the citizens, despite any feeling to the contrary, might be willing to accomodate themselves for subsistences. After all, it was hoped, there was nothing wrong with a sacrifice to political and material expediency if, in the future, a return to the status quo could be anticipated. It is this sacrifice, and the failure to envisage a Terror which claimed in its wake over three hundred lives in five months, that led the Bordelais to allow their principles to be compromised. It, more than any other issue, allowed the representatives to exert authoritarianism over the Bordelais. To the people of Bordeaux, the return of the Conventionnels would be equal to food. The magnitude of this error will be presently shown.

The testimony of participants in great events is often confused and conflicting. Nowhere is this more strikingly evident than in the correspondence emanating from the Gironde. Baudot, on September 30 or soon before<sup>2</sup> had inferred that victory over the Bordelais was close at hand. Tallien, on the other hand, reported from Agen the same day to the Paris Jacobins, that he was skeptical of the calmness and serenity of Bordeaux. The Jacobins must not be deceived, he said, and if they would read his correspondence they would see "that it [Bordeaux] is very far from ... order."<sup>3</sup> Agen, however, had been cleaned up, he boasted.

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<sup>1</sup>See letters to the Committee of Public Safety for only a two month period for an indication of the problems; ibid., VI, 388-389, 528; VII, 106.

<sup>2</sup>See n. 2, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to the Jacobins, September 30, 1793; Réimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 28.

We do not have sufficient evidence to resolve the various differences of opinion. Perhaps while Baudot was exposing the power of the nation to the French populace, Tallien was explaining to the Jacobins that, as an effective organization, they were far from being entrenched in Bordeaux. Each representative to the Gironde for the Convention or the Committee, or both, saw only what he wanted to see. To go one step further, perhaps he saw only what he was supposed to see for his interest group. It is evident though that no one report could be trusted, much less verified. In spite of this attitude, these reports were trickling in from the Bordeaux area, and were read though not entirely believed.

On the same day that Tallien's letter was read to the Jacobins, a deputation from Bordeaux appeared at the society, and told the membership of the "unhappiness which afflicts this city," and of the attention which the new municipality had been giving the citizens in an effort to ameliorate these difficulties.<sup>1</sup> True Frenchmen everywhere were maintaining a virtuous brotherhood, they declared, and this was no more in evidence than in Bordeaux.

No sooner had this deputation seated itself when a complete rebuttal was heard. It was brought to the attention of the members, most likely through reference to Tallien's letter, that only the lower echelon of criminals had been arrested; the chiefs had escaped. It was time that the Bordelais ceased their ambivalence, said Desfieux, "and purged the scoundrels who infested the city."<sup>2</sup> Though Tallien was but a relative newcomer to the scene, the Jacobins sided with his report.

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<sup>1</sup>Alphonse Aulard, La Société des Jacobins, recueil des Documents pour l'histoire du Club des Jacobins de Paris (5 volumes, Paris, 1889-1895), V, 434.

<sup>2</sup>Speech made by Desfieux to the Jacobin Society, September 30, 1793; Reimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 29.

At this juncture it might be well to determine the state of affairs within Bordeaux itself. The provisional government had maintained an aloofness towards the representatives after their initial displays of revolutionary fervor. The deputies on mission viewed this half-heartedness very skeptically and, at a meeting of the newly elected committee of surveillance on October 3, forced the committeemen to swear an oath "to behave out of neither hate nor fear, but constantly after the intimate impulses of [their] spirit and conscience, of holding secret the operations of the committee and of maintaining, at the peril of ... life, the unity and indivisibility of the French Republic."<sup>1</sup> Dissidents were now obviously under the power of the national representatives too.

Two days earlier, in order to prepare for the revolution's acceptance in Bordeaux, it had been decreed by the municipality that the law of March 29 would be observed and enforced.<sup>2</sup> Not content with this, the city government further proclaimed that all the laws of the Convention, including the decrees of April 21, 23, August 2, 12 and September 3 and 17, were to be obeyed and reinforced by the deputies, although these men were still at La Reole or Agen.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, I, 377.

<sup>2</sup>All home owners were to affix outside their house the names, surnames, age and professions of those inside. Stipulations were even made as to the exact place where the notice was to be put.

<sup>3</sup>The decree of April 21 and 23 was the motivating guide for the arrest and deportation of priests who "did not preach the sermons of ... liberty and equality." Decrees of August 1 and September 3, respectively, referred to the confiscation of all sites which contained armaments, and to the forced loan which had been demanded by the Convention. The August 12 edict, as well as the decree of September 17, was relative to the procedures to be taken when suspects were arrested. All decrees in Duvergier, Décrets et Lois, V, 254, 256 and VI, 67, 143-145, and 86, 172.

With the execution of these decrees came the news from the deputies that an addition of two officers was to be made to the committee of subsistences<sup>1</sup> to oversee and accelerate the operations of this body. The men chosen were Jacobins. A revolutionary army of sans-culottes was also established from men of the outlying districts. Everything was being made ready for the assault upon Bordeaux which was shortly to occur.

On October 5, four days after the above took place, two delegates from Paris Commune, Dunouy and Viallard, reached Bordeaux on a tour of inspection. They later related to the Convention that they had been received with much felicitation, pomp, and brotherhood in the city. The provisional government had conducted them to the maison commune amid cries from the populace of "vive la republique, la Convention nationale, et les Parisiens!"<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, the two men from Paris were convinced of the revolutionary fervor of the Bordelais.

Roux-Fazillac, deputy from the Dordogne, who had been charged by the Convention with the task of raising the levee in that department, was not quite so impressed. In a dispatch to the Committee of Public Safety, he mentioned the attitude of the two Commune members and, terminating his letter, stated that in his belief Bordeaux was completely insincere in its revolution. He hoped though, that "he was deceived in his conjectures."<sup>3</sup> Despite the pleadings of Dunouy and Viallard that the Bordelais "with great impatience await the

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 13 and note, same page.

<sup>2</sup>See letter to the Paris Commune, October 5, 1793; Réimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 90-91.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from Roux-Fazillac to the Committee of Public Safety, October 5, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VII, 235-236.

representatives Bodot (sic) and Isabeau (sic)," the deputies, although being promised Bordeaux' adherence to liberty, refused to change their time schedule for invasion of the city.

Jacobins in general, club members and Conventionnels, were beginning to feel an acute annoyance with the situation in Bordeaux. In the second week of October, 1793 letters from the Committee of Public Safety to the deputies in the Gironde began to grow progressively more menacing. On October 8, General Brune was officially ordered to "second the operations of the representatives of the people on mission to Bordeaux." No more time must be wasted, it was important to act immediately. That same day, almost as if to forestall such letters from being sent, Ysabeau transmitted a letter from La Reole to the Convention. Several arrests were mentioned in it, most notably that of Duchatel, a Girondin sympathizer. Ysabeau continued:

We [Tallien and Ysabeau] will purge the nation of ... scoundrels who abound ..., .... This extreme dryness which has been felt in these regions, has retarded the success of our mission...

True sans-culottes ... each day share their patriotism; and some days we have, with their aid, unveiled intriguers, hypocrites, and traitors, and have [even] dethroned federalists."<sup>1</sup>

On the previous day, both deputies had decreed that no ship was to depart from Bordeaux which carried with it émigrés or étrangers who might carry with them French money or merchandise. And on October 6, they annulled all passports in the area, including even those which

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Ysabeau, October 8, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXVI, 575. Tallien was absent, having been busily arresting traitors in St.-Emilion and Libourne. He came back apparently after Ysabeau had finished writing the letter, because reference is made to the former only in a postscript: "Tallien has succeeded in animating public spirit, and [has] removed several vicious administrations."

had been approved by the new municipal government. Suspects also were disarmed. Although these laws had been put into effect and promulgated by the deputies in La Reole, they were completely in accord with the wishes of the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety. Speaking to the Convention for the Committee, Herault de Sechelles said: "Patriotism is coming back to Bordeaux, but to insure it we must disarm suspects and those who adhere to the older associations; [we must] distribute those arms to true republicans and ... annul ... passports."<sup>1</sup>

A brisk correspondence now developed between the deputies, the Convention, and the Committee. On October 8 two letters were sent, one to each body, by Baudot and Chaudron-Roussau. Both documents contain substantially the same advice from these deputies. They thought the time ripe for the taking of Bordeaux. They realized, of course, that there was still some opposition but, on the whole, conditions were favorable for immediate and direct action. The army at La Reole was ready, and success was practically assured.<sup>2</sup>

Tallien was apparently unaware of the letter since he refuted Baudot's opinion in a letter of his own the following day. As can be seen, one of the major problems during the revolutionary period was the undeniable difficulties in communications. This is nowhere more pointedly shown than in this letter which Tallien wrote on October 9 to Pache. Unfortunately, a good deal of the text appears to be unrecorded, but contemporary sources strongly hint at its full contents. Beginning by telling Pache that he and the other deputies were certain that the outstanding members of the escaped Girondins were either in Bordeaux

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<sup>1</sup>Speech to the Convention, October 6, 1793; *ibid.*, LXXVI, 171.

<sup>2</sup>See letters in *Réimp. Moniteur*, XVIII, 125 and Aulard, *Recueil des Actes*, VII, 312-315.



or its environs, Tallien continued by stating that the Bordeaux municipal government was doing nothing to capture these criminals.<sup>1</sup>

Jean-Lambert reached his conclusion in an emotional outburst against the Parisians for their "being the dupes of the rogues and money-jobbers" of Bordeaux.<sup>2</sup> The city had not expelled counter-revolutionists. In fact, they "still paraded around the city insolently; they have even had the impudence to enroll among them the traitor Birotteau, ex-deputy Duchatel, ...One can scarcely count 12 energetic patriots from among the fifty-six who compose the new municipality ...," he continued bitterly. "It is true they celebrated fetes in honor of Marat; but this is pure show. Hunger and fear are the sole rallying points ... of the twenty-eight sections, but not more than four of them believe in the good principles."

It was astounding to him, he said, that the Parisians had even applauded this "feuillantin" movement directed by aristocrats to forestall their execution by sans-culottes who believed them to be moderates and federalists." Angrily denouncing the Bordelais for their hatching of all counter-revolutionary plots, Tallien damned the men who had corresponded so avidly with Lyon, Marseilles, Caen, Toulouse, and the Vendée. He concluded: " ... we were capable of believing this [counter-revolution] suppressed in Bordeaux! Believe, to the contrary, that they conspire in the shadows. We are going ... to Bordeaux, but [only] with an imposing force against the malelovents ...; and with abundant provisions of grain...."

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<sup>1</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, I, 389.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the Paris Commune, October 9, 1793; Réimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 121.

This document conflicted flatly with the statement of the two Commune members who had recently visited Bordeaux. These two were severely examined by the Convention but, they maintained, they had spoken the truth. Tallien, however, proved an accurate forecaster of future events. No longer was anyone to delude themselves; the Bordeaux situation had become endemic and had to be resolved. He understood that the final expedition into Bordeaux was to be a serious venture, and had to be considered as such. When the representatives and their sans-culottes approached the city, it would be with the unshakeable belief that no power on earth could make them retreat. Severe measures were promised in his words. These severe measures would only serve to plunge France into another Terror, more bloody than the one in which Tallien was now involved.

Tallien's letter to the Commune was followed by another, two days later, to the Committee of Public Safety. Seeing royalists everywhere, he wrote that "districts, municipalities, tribunals, all are poisoned with royalists, federalists, and partisans of the Commission Populaire."<sup>1</sup> (All these evil influences had been replaced by one of the ever available, uneducated, sans-culottes, who was hardly qualified for any position, much less this one with authority). The sans-culotte army had travelled with him in his travels about Libourne in his quest for Girondins and, everywhere, they had been met by cries of "vive la République! Vive la Montagne!" Patriots feted him and aristocrats shuddered at the sight of him. The federalists had behaved very badly in this area, but now,

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, October 11, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VII, 368-369.

he declared, "the day of national justice had arrived; the hour of destruction had sounded for the traitors." He was still not, as many were, deluded as to the task before him. All he desired was support from the Montagnards for, if this was given, the Republic would be saved.

The same day, a letter was sent by Tallien and Ysabeau, and Pierre Garrau, another deputy to the area, to the Committee. Duchatel, a secretary of Brissot, Marchena, and Riouffe, it related, were all to be tried before the tribunal. Birotteau and several others were still at large, but a thorough search was now being made for them. Clearly, it was only a matter of time before the Bordelais would succumb to the pressure of the deputies.

Within a week, they inferred, the invasion of Bordeaux would occur. First though, wheat had to be sent from Paris to accompany them into the city. It would be a triumphal march for the Mountain only if these provisions came with the representatives. For the Bordelais, the march of triumph would only mean more repression and hardship. Interestingly enough, the pessimist, Roux-Fazillac, no longer believed the revolution in Bordeaux to be simulated.<sup>1</sup> Long a foe of the Bordelais, he wrote on October 12 that "yesterday eight chiefs of the conspiracy passed through Angouleme conducted to Paris by a good, strong guard."<sup>2</sup> The conspirators would, of course, be followed by others, or so he thought.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Convention, October 12, 1793; *ibid.*, VII, 347.

<sup>2</sup>The eight were Dudan, père, former attorney-general; Lemoine, fils, president of the district of Bordeaux; Lacombe-Figuereau, administrator of Libourne district, and former member of the Commission Populaire; Lemel, notable of the former municipality; L'Abbé Aulier; Delormel, a printer; Ferrier; Gercy, a customs director. The charges against these men are not stated, but it is reasonable to believe that they were accused of counter-revolutionary ideas.

Though the policy seemed to be the result of long planning and premeditation on the part of the deputies, their colleagues in Paris saw lethargy in this very carefulness. Tallien and Ysabeau were sent a letter from the Committee of Public Safety in which they were berated for their slowness in capturing the federalist stronghold of Bordeaux.<sup>1</sup> The recent decree, October 12, against the Lyonnais, was held up to the two deputies as the model for the treatment of the Bordelais.<sup>2</sup> Too much time had been wasted said the voice of Paris. The time for ambivalence was over, and action rather than planning was of the essence. "A prompt entry at the head of an imposing force, ... is the sole means of assuring Bordeaux to the Republic," the Committee declared. The representatives were, nonetheless, given a completely free hand to do as they saw fit.<sup>3</sup> This letter, signed by Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes for the Committee, indicated what the future had in store for Bordeaux.<sup>4</sup>

Whether or not this letter actually stimulated the deputies to direct action is uncertain. We do not know when they received it, but if the usual time lapse had occurred between the date of mailing and the receipt of it, the letter was received at the earliest, a day after their entrance into Bordeaux. On October 16, 1793 the deputies,

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from the Committee of Public Safety, October 13, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VII, 397.

<sup>2</sup>Decree of October 12, 1793; Duvergier, Décrets et Lois, VI, 222.

<sup>3</sup>It is the postscript of this letter which, however, really smacks of the Terror. "Punish severely and promptly traitors and royalists, especially the chiefs and principal agents of the Girondin intrigues and counter-revolution; challenge the ... patriotism with which they clothe themselves ... This is the only way to repair counter-revolutionary [damage] and hypocrisy ..."

<sup>4</sup>These men were two of the most vicious terrorists on the Committee.

minus the promised grain relief, made their grand entrance into the city. Accompanied by a sans-culotte army of approximately 4000 men led by Generals Brune and Janet, the deputies were determined to enforce the decrees of the Convention without delay. They had been delegated to take all the measures necessary for public safety in this vanquished city and, in matters of public policy, they would be more absolute and ruthless than the former intendant.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jullian, Histoire de Bordeaux, 675.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE REIGN OF TERROR IN BORDEAUX (OCTOBER 1793-FEBRUARY 1794)

On October 16, 1793 Tallien and the other deputies on mission made their first appearance as a group in Bordeaux. They intended to collaborate with the new municipal government in order to "re-establish ... tranquillity and abundance."<sup>1</sup> Their entrance was far from reassuring, however, for they were preceded by two cannons, and followed by three or four thousand men. Nevertheless, the deputies seemed a god-send to the populace which had not known peace since the September 18 uprising. It was hoped and indeed expected that they would soon put an end to the miseries of famine and unrest caused by the revolution.

Within two days of their arrival, the deputies asserted their authority in a provocative and threatening manner. On October 18, they promulgated a decree containing twenty-one points.<sup>2</sup> Among other items it included a statement of policy which declared the government of Bordeaux provisionally military. It also called for the establishment of a twenty-four member committee which was to watch carefully for all enemies of the Republic. The committee of surveillance, established on March 21, was to be maintained until a new one could be created. All of the civil and military authorities were to be reconstituted, and provision was made for the creation of a military commission. Asserting that a conspiracy existed against the unity and indivisibility of

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<sup>1</sup>Bernadau, Histoire de Bordeaux, 183.

<sup>2</sup>See appendix II.

the French Republic, the deputies proclaimed Bordeaux to be in a state of seige.

Within twenty-four hours after the law was made public, all citizens were required to deposit in the arsenal at the Chateau-Trompette the weapons in their possession. These were to be placed in the hands of brave sans-culottes who alone were worthy of defending liberty and the republican government. Not even a temptation to resistance would be allowed by the deputies.

The edict of October 18 contained the germ of the system which was later adopted by the Conventionnels in their organization of the terror. With the enactment of this decree, the law of August 6, over which so much blood had already been shed, was now to be enforced. This entailed the assassination or imprisonment of all the Bordelais and Girondins who had raised the banner of the Commission Populaire.

Before any direct action was taken, Tallien informed the Convention through the Paris Committee that the program of starvation and infiltration had succeeded.<sup>1</sup> The four deputies wrote that they had entered the city and found themselves surrounded by a wildly cheering crowd of sans-culottes who testified to the exhuberant public spirit. But the deputies were not deceived by the Bordelais. "We are ... decided to spare none of the guilty," they wrote. "You [the Convention] can now be sure that Bordeaux has returned to the Republic by [observing] means by which ... we ... purge the city of all scoundrels...."

General Brune, who had accompanied the representatives into the city also made it clear that he was in complete sympathy with their

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, October 16, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXVII, 460-461.

objectives. In a letter to the Committee of Public Safety he reported that the deputies were not only joyously welcomed by the sans-culottes, but also with "grimaces by the aristocrats."<sup>1</sup> (It is unlikely that any people, induced to submit by the promise of food, would do anything but cheer when they thought provisions were on hand. But the General and the deputies naively believed the people to honestly love them).

Bordeaux was no longer aristocratic, but revolutionary, Brune claimed. Thanks to citizens Tallien, Ysabeau, and Baudot "this beautiful revolution had occurred in Bordeaux," for with their infinite patience they had formulated a program by which the blood of liberty's enemies had been spilled there. Brune closed his letter with an oath to the philosophes who had conserved the country for the Republic. The evidence, thus far, seemed heavily weighted in the deputies' favor.

Three days later (October 21), the four representatives officially acquainted the Convention with the public expression of eagerness which the Bordelais had shown less than a week before.<sup>2</sup> The deputies reiterated in part what they said before; they had been met by sans-culottes who were holding "laurel-branches in their hands while ecstatically repeating the words 'vive la République! vive la Montagne!'" After expressing this delight and joy which the sans-culottes felt for them, the deputies continued: "We are anxious to complete our work by executing the men who wanted to found an empire other than that of our sainted laws...." The deputies had, consequently, enacted a law which

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Brune, October 18, 1793; ibid., LXXVII, 461.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the Convention, October 21, 1793; Réimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 273.



was to be rigidly enforced and, in fact, the disarmament requested in it had been executed quite rapidly.<sup>1</sup>

In order to erase from the memory of man the terrible word Gironde, it was recommended by the proconsuls that the Convention approve the change of the department's name to Bec-d'Ambes.<sup>2</sup> The deputies then announced that the traitor Lavauguyon, whom the Commission had sent to surrender Toulon, had been arrested and was to be immediately tried before the newly created military commission.

The Conventionnels in Paris received the report from Bordeaux with great applause, and approved it without discussion. Moreover, Voulland, the deputy from Gard, moved that this Bordeaux report be sent to the Committee of Public Safety for examination.<sup>3</sup> If this body's examination of the report proved to be satisfactory, Voulland urged the Convention to send copies of it to other departments which had also recovered from rebellion. The success in Bordeaux might be utilized then as a demonstration of revolutionary prowess.

On the day that this letter was read to the Convention, the deputies' reply to the Committee's attack of October 13 was also read. Their decree of October 18, it began, had been promulgated before the Committee's letter was received and, feeling that an unwarranted reproach had been given to them, the deputies asserted that it would

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<sup>1</sup>On this point the deputies say that "superb arms have been given to our dear sans-culottes. There are some pistols garnished with gold. The gold will go to the Treasury (Monnaie), the guns to the volunteers, and the federalists will go to the guillotine by the judgment of the commission militaire...."

<sup>2</sup>This name remained on the department of the Gironde until the end of the Thermidorean reaction. See note, p. 203, Réimp. Moniteur, XVIII. The name had already been changed by the deputies, but needed Convention approval.

<sup>3</sup>Speech by Voulland, October 26, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXVIII, 561.

be an easy matter to prove that their arrival in Bordeaux had secured the city for the Republic. But, they insisted, it would be far simpler to show that they had wasted no time in ridding the town of muscadins and counter-revolutionaries.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee had been poorly informed of the situation in Bordeaux. To illustrate this point they said: "You believed us to have an imposing force: ... stop deceiving yourself. It is with 1500 infantry and 150 cavalry that we entered Bordeaux, ... we have no other forces."<sup>2</sup> No one in Bordeaux, however, realized that this scarcity of soldiers existed because what few troops there were in the area made enough of a disturbance to convince the Bordelais that they were under seige by 10,000 men.

Bordeaux was not an easy city to conquer. Until the 20th (the day before this letter was sent), it could have mustered as many as 40,000 armed men for a battle. Under these circumstances, it had been wiser to temporize there than to divert troops from the Vendee or the frontiers to aid in the Gironde. By demonstrating a superior knowledge of the situation the deputies had embarrassed the Committee and refuted its opinion of October 13. This had unfortunate repercussions when the integrity of Tallien and Ysabeau was later questioned by the Committee.

To further buttress their position, Tallien and his colleagues made a subtle reference to the Committee's unfilled promise of subsistences for Bordeaux. If grain had been offered earlier by the Committee,

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, October 21, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VII, 552-555.

<sup>2</sup>If this is true, exactly what happened to the equipment which had been sent for 4000 soldiers? Are the deputies fabricating a story to deliberately engender sympathy from the Committee?

the city would have fallen earlier. A comparison of Lyon and Bordeaux (supra, p. 42), was unfair, they said. The former was a pile of rubble, while the latter was fervently devoted to the Republic. In Bordeaux the patriots had triumphed, and the blood of aristocrats, royalists, and federalists ran in the streets.

The four deputies had been commissioned by the Convention as responsible men and now demanded the confidence which they felt was due to them. They warned the Convention not to be duped by the agents of reaction who lied and slandered them in Paris.

The representatives, led by Tallien, had pointed out to the Committee of Public Safety as tactfully as possible that: (1) it was a victim of spurious lies and rumors; (2) its judgment was not infallible on provincial affairs; (3) it was unable to provide subsistences - always a sore spot for the Committee; and (4) since it could not control the conditions in Paris, how could it possibly question the maneuvers of men more aware of the conditions in Bordeaux than the Paris Committee was. Again we see a situation where immediate action can best be handled by the men closest to the crisis.

Within Bordeaux itself, Tallien and the others, desiring to quickly dispose of all of the conspirators, legislated the seven man military commission into existence.<sup>1</sup> This group constituted a potent force for the rooting out of intriguers and was (1) to execute within twenty-four hours all those declared to be outlaws by the Convention, and

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<sup>1</sup>"There will be established in Bordeaux, a military commission composed of seven members, named by the representatives of the people.

"This commission will be given the task of knowing the men who have been outlawed by the Convention, and of executing them immediately." See Louis-Marie Prudhomme's newspaper, Révolutions de Paris (17 volumes, Paris, 1789-1793), number 219, 370.

found in the neighborhood of Bordeaux; (2) to judge all refractory priests and emigres accused of subverting the unity and indivisibility of France; (3) to condemn anyone who advocated a return to the absolute state which had been overthrown by the revolution; (4) to maintain the restrictions imposed by the National Convention upon merchandise and strangers; and (5) to keep themselves acquainted with any matter on which the deputies might seek their advice.

The commission was, moreover, to judge all of the persons sent to it by the committee of surveillance only after procedure had been agreed upon by both bodies. This plan depended on denunciations offered by "good citizens." The political opinions of the accused were to be the sole concern, and there was no appeal from the commission's judgment.<sup>1</sup> The revolutionary army would immediately enforce all of the judgments of this commission.

This commission, with Lacombe at its head, had no soldiers to support it,<sup>2</sup> no jury to hear and adjudicate at trials, and no public prosecutor. As president, Lacombe often arrested, accused, and condemned all of those who had been brought before the commission. He had been a schoolmaster from Toulouse when he first met Tallien, and the latter, much impressed with this rural Maratiste, took him to Bordeaux, and appointed him as the key officer on the commission.<sup>3</sup>

On October 22, the revolutionary tribunal, named by the commission militaire, was established in Bordeaux and, on the following day, the guillotine was erected on the Place Nationale.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bernadau, Histoire de Bordeaux, 186.

<sup>2</sup>This belied its title of commission militaire.

<sup>3</sup>Henri Wallon, Les Représentants du Peuple en Mission et la Justice Révolutionnaire dans les Départements en l'an II, 1793-1794 (5 volumes, Paris, 1889-1890), II, 196.

<sup>4</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 26.

On October 24, Tallien and Ysabeau informed the Convention that their presence in Bordeaux had "begun to produce the happy effects which the republic had a right to expect."<sup>1</sup> The search for the criminals would not cease until all of the conspirators had been punished. Lavauguyon, "the principal architect of the Toulon counter-revolution, had been executed the day before, amidst the applause of a great crowd." Birotteau and Girey-Dupré, the letter continued, had both been arrested. The former, a colleague of Tallien at the Convention, was executed without delay; while the latter was sent to face the revolutionary tribunal in Paris.<sup>2</sup>

Of more interest to the radical Mountain, was the announcement that the national club had been officially restored to its rightful place in the commune. An additional organ of the Paris government was in operation. As for disarmament, it had been so successful that enough weapons were collected in the city to allow three fully armed battalions to leave for the Franco-Spanish border. This army was composed of sans-culottes incorporated into it as a feature of egalitarianism. The revolution had been accepted wholeheartedly at Bordeaux, and there was no more opposition to the national government.

To create this forced 'camaraderie' the deputies had used the repressive instruments of the Terror without rest since their own arrival eight days earlier. The prisons were bursting with priests, merchants, and nobles. The revolutionary army led by Brune and Janet had provided the armed support necessary for the deputies. And the

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Convention, October 24, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VII, 613.

<sup>2</sup>See the procès-verbal of Birotteau's trial in Archives Parlementaires, LXXVII, 691-692.

commission militaire had begun to try and sentence the prisoners provided for it by the committee of surveillance.<sup>1</sup>

Though the Bordeaux sans-culottes had been treated with great favor by Tallien and his colleagues in the early days of the Convention rule, they were criticized by some of these workers for their ostentatious mode of living. As Prudhomme relates, the representatives on mission lived very well, while the patriots were treated poorly. Some were even arrested and, when imprisoned, found themselves lacking the usual comforts given to political prisoners.<sup>2</sup>

Some of these "patriots" undoubtedly deserved a prison sentence though they were not imprisoned until after Thermidor. Such, for example, was the new Mayor, Bertrand. He was a revolutionary hypocrite, Prudhomme continues, who lived as an aristocrat as soon as he assumed office while, at the same time, praising the joys of the sans-culotte life. He was a known thief,<sup>3</sup> and Tallien watched him closely. Since the treasure of the churches eventually found its way to the Mayor's office, the proconsul took his 'cut' as the prime representative of the nation in Bordeaux. Tallien also lined his pockets through bribery. Though equality of citizens had been declared in principle for all Frenchmen, in practice this was impossible to maintain. The military commission, for example, was often bribed not to execute certain prisoners. Four hundred thousand livres, it was said, could buy your life. Again Tallien came in for his share of this blood money. The shocking

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<sup>1</sup>The committee functioned quite actively. Arrests took place without relaxation and domiciliary arrests interrupted the nights of every householder. See Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 28.

<sup>2</sup>Prudhomme, Histoire Générale et Impartiale, V, 435.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 435.

part about this arrangement was that, despite the bribes, the executions were often carried out according to plan.

Though some citizens could buy their life, the majority, including former members of the old municipal government or the now defunct Commission Populaire, could not. Thus Saige, the former Mayor of Bordeaux, was guillotined on October 25. The guillotine had been placed outside of Tallien's window where he could, at his leisure, direct and applaud this execution as well as the others then taking place.

On the day that Saige was executed, two other events of great importance took place; one in Paris and one in Bordeaux. In the former city the executive council, taking notice of the communication disruption between Paris and Bordeaux, officially sent two agents to reopen the communication channels between the two cities.<sup>1</sup> That same day in Bordeaux, Tallien and Ysabeau, deluged by tearful groups of women hoping to save their menfolk, decreed that in the future: (1) all the petitions, addresses, and claims of these women were to be directed to a new bureau expressly created for this purpose; (2) letters to the deputies were to be specially registered at the bureau and answered without delay; (3) pass-ports were to be issued by the new bureau; (4) all those who desired to transmit secret information to the deputies were, in writing, to ask for an appointment through this bureau; (5) both the committee of surveillance and the committee of subsistences, in addition to the revolutionary generals (Brune and Janet), were to be shown the evidences of faith to which they were entitled; (6) women, or other individuals, who came to intervene for the detained

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<sup>1</sup>Decree of the executive council, October 25, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VIII, 4-5.

or to solicit were to be regarded as suspects; and (7) only from noon until two o'clock each afternoon would the deputies be available to hear the claims of the citizens.<sup>1</sup>

Able now to "close their ears to all solicitations, especially to those presented by a portion of that sex ... of which seduction is the first appanage and often the lone merit," the deputies turned their attention elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> They selected Antony, a justice of the peace, to investigate the conditions of the prisons in the area, and to make pertinent recommendations to them. After a survey, Antony suggested extensive prison reform. When the idea of reform was implemented by Tallien, however, he was accused of moderation by his enemies. To be accused of this was the one great crime of any revolutionist, and the term crops up again and again in regard to Tallien and his actions.

In the midst of this initial attack on Tallien, his two associates, Baudot and Chaudron-Roussau, left for Paris on October 27. There, they hoped to explain the problems which the representatives had faced in Bordeaux, and to eradicate any suspicion of moderation. Two days after their departure, Tallien and Ysabeau dispatched a joint communique to the Committee in which this body was informed of the impending arrival of the two travellers. Paris was to be apprised of the effects of the terror on the Bordelais, the food shortage, and the arrests made.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 28-30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, October 29, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VIII, 109-112.



As an item of relatively unimportant news, the deputies added that three armed battalions<sup>1</sup> (supra, p. 51), were leaving the next day to battle the enemies of France.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the death of Saige was noted with the happy thought that the Republic, through his death, had acquired upwards of ten million livres. This money had already been spent for food. More important, Saige's execution demonstrated that any man of his type, rich, monopolist, or federalist, was destined for the guillotine.

A citizen would be punished for his opinions and also for adhering to any vestiges of the former aristocratic life, by the possession of chateaux, paintings, silver plate, etc. These remnants of the old order were either in the process of being annihilated or had already been destroyed. (La Réole was cited as an example). During the search for these souvenirs of the ancien régime, the letter continued, the committee of surveillance had expropriated much gold and silver. This had been used to reimburse the mint for the 350,000 piastres which the Commission Populaire had borrowed in its abortive rebellion.

To the casual observer then, it appeared that the troubles in Bordeaux were under control. The further use of force seemed unnecessary. Tallien and Ysabeau, however, did not share this opinion. They had promulgated certain decrees because this was the only way in which they could strengthen their position in Bordeaux. They knew that the

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<sup>1</sup>On October 28, the Committee of Public Safety, believing that Bordeaux was in a very strong military position, requested that 2000 guns be sent from there to the armies of the Pyrénées. See decree of this date in ibid., VIII, 76.

<sup>2</sup>A detachment of the revolutionary army had also gone to a nearby commune in order to set straight this body which had halted subsistences destined for the starving Bordelais.

counter-revolutionaries lied and slandered them, but they relied upon the Committee to reply to these charges.

Though both of the deputies wished to remain independent, it is obvious that the confidence of the Convention was essential to their peace of mind. Allowed to run rampant for three months in Bordeaux, they were finally halted by the Convention's decree of 14 Frimaire, which had been enacted precisely to prevent such arbitrary deeds from occurring. Until this date, however, any adherence to national directives was received with relief by the Paris body.

At his appearance before the Convention on November 3, Baudot summarized the chain of events, beginning with the infiltration of Jacobins into Bordeaux.<sup>1</sup> In his desire to create a favorable impression for Tallien and Ysabeau, Baudot exposed Birotteau as the type of man they had all considered representative of the counter-revolutionist class. Birotteau was chosen because he had sworn on the steps leading to the guillotine that, had the Girondins triumphed, the Jacobins would have been executed. Any man who said such things was innately bad, Baudot inferred. And all of the counter-revolutionists were of this brand.

Nevertheless, Bordeaux was completely loyal to the Republic, he continued, despite the fact that political offenders were still being disposed of regularly by the sans-culottes. The Bordelais, however, "even with the best of intentions, were in revolutionary infancy." Consequently, they would have to be treated very gently by the Convention or the city might explode with violence. Tallien and Ysabeau were

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<sup>1</sup>Speech of November 3, 1793; Réimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 324. He also appeared before the Jacobins Club, and said that the Bordelais had greeted the deaths of the federalists with cries of "vive la Montagne! Vive la République!" See Aulard, Société des Jacobins, V, 495.

functioning as well as might be expected in restoring republicanism in Bordeaux, Baudot declared.<sup>1</sup>

While Baudot was travelling to Paris, the military commission was beginning to play an integral part in the terror at Bordeaux. On October 30, its members were granted a salary of eighteen livres a day. This money came from the confiscated property of men condemned to the guillotine, and it gave the officers of the commission the opportunity to devote full time to their activities.<sup>2</sup> Operating in collaboration with local committees of surveillance, the commission proved to be an important factor in the rapid filling of the prisons with "criminals."<sup>3</sup> The commission, with Tallien's consent, made use of every expedient to insure the public safety; it named a municipal government to function until an election was held for a new body; reconstituted the national club; sought to ameliorate the problem of subsistences; offered aid to soldier's parents; and prevented the sale of merchandise to émigrés or foreigners.<sup>4</sup>

Because of its total involvement in the revolution, the commission could not help but proselytize in other areas of the Gironde. One of the

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<sup>1</sup>As a last comment, Baudot insisted that the eight men sent to Paris (supra, p. 41), be returned to Bordeaux. It was more purposeful to try them there, he said, because fewer trials took place in Bordeaux, and the populace would be more impressed with revolutionary justice than the blase Parisians. Besides, he maintained, only eight minutes were necessary to judge all of the culprits. At this juncture, the deputy Thuriot commented that three of the accused had been judged that very morning. The Convention decreed the return of the remaining five men to Bordeaux. See Reimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 324.

<sup>2</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 39.

<sup>3</sup>Beginning on October 28 and lasting through November 5, the Bordeaux commission sentenced four men to death, one man to six years in irons, fined the four Rabas brothers 500,000 livres, and confiscated the goods of Bertonneau, a suicide and former leader of the Commission Populaire.

<sup>4</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 52.

cities which it visited was Libourne, scarcely twenty miles to the northeast of Bordeaux. This town had to be investigated because it had adhered to the program of the Commission Populaire and, still worse, it had tried to enlist support from other departments.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, on November 7, after Bordeaux had been reduced to relative quiet, Tallien gave his consent for the commission to operate against the Libournais.<sup>2</sup> Within four days after its journey, Tallien reported to the Committee. The military commission had summarily executed four federalists, had sentenced several others to severe punishment, and had acquired more than a million livres for the Republic by confiscation or through pressure.<sup>3</sup>

Tallien next spoke of the prison reform which had occurred through the benevolence of Ysabeau and himself. They had tried to equate humanity and justice with the principles of the revolution. Tallien had unwittingly exposed himself to the charge of moderation.

Far from being appeased by this letter, the Committee replied with an attack upon the deputies. They were shocked to see that "... outrageous weakness of principles, unworthy of men who should be revolutionaries, had dictated ... judgments of the military commission." The Committee baldly stated that royalists and federalists had escaped the guillotine by the payment of a mere fine. "Gold can not satisfy an

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<sup>1</sup>Tallien in his quest for escaped Girondins had visited the town on October 7. He came to Libourne via St.-Emilion, where he had confiscated the property of Gaudet's father in lieu of finding the son, an escaped Girondin.

<sup>2</sup>The decree was actually legislated on November 2.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety November 11, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VIII, 299, 343-345. It had been necessary to bring, in the name of national justice, "terror to the spirit of the Libournais aristocrats who had been the acolytes of the Bordelais and this ... Commission Populaire."

offense against the Republic.....," they added.<sup>1</sup> In allowing the fines to be collected, Tallien and Ysabeau were adding strength to their persecutors in Paris.

... Moderation has perched itself in the sanctuary of the revolutionary laws. It has ... blunted action, and you have permitted it, in a city which has rebelled! ... Cease sustaining that which violates the law, ... or you become the accomplices of ... criminals. Your words have not been offered to the Convention; they have been unworthy....

It was now certain that the charges which had circulated since Antony's investigations of the prisons had reached Paris. Whether or not the Committee still felt humiliated by the attack of the representatives on October 21 (*supra*, pp. 47-49) is not clear, but this much is indisputable, the Committee's letter was an omen of future events. It was worded too strongly to be classified merely as a letter of warning. Both Tallien and Ysabeau realized that they would have to become more repressive now that they were accused of allowing the Bordelais conspirators and federalists to go unmolested. Almost certainly Bordeaux would be more closely scrutinized by the Committee of Public Safety.

Despite the Committee's opinion that Tallien and Ysabeau, and the military commission had been too lenient, the results of the commission's investigation of Libournais society are worth noting. Meeting only ten times in less than two weeks, it passed judgment on sixty cases.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See reply to the letter of October 11, 1793 from the Committee of Public Safety, no date given; *ibid.*, VIII, 345.

<sup>2</sup>In regard to the commission's attitude towards recalcitrants: "...If, in this commission, there was a being too cowardly to condemn his father to death, if he was guilty, then the villain would himself fall under the glove of the law." With such sentiments as this, it can be seen why the commission was maintained as part of the terror machinery. See Wallon, Les Représentants en Mission, II, 197.

Only five death sentences are recorded, but ten others were sentenced to life imprisonment. Thirteen "criminals" were given short term imprisonment, while sixteen citizens were acquitted of any crime against the state. The remaining sixteen were fined a total of 692,000 livres, of which 585,000 went to the Republic. The remainder was distributed between the sans-culottes and the parents of soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

(2)

Throughout the remainder of his proconsulship, Tallien tempered his actions to suit the Bordelais rather than to please Paris. On November 9, after hearing a report that several citizens were being intimidated and maltreated by the Bordeaux committee of surveillance, Tallien and Ysabeau ordered this group to obey the Convention.<sup>2</sup> To check on the committee, the deputies demanded a complete account of its operations including the exact reasons for arresting citizens and searching homes. In addition, a list of those objects taken during a committee search was to be made and given to the representatives as a check sheet. Lastly, it was ordered that every three days, two members of the committee were to go to the prisons in order to hear any claims of the detained.<sup>3</sup>

Tallien was also interested in restoring Bordeaux to its pre-revolutionary economic status. Commerce in the city had almost entirely

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<sup>1</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 64.

<sup>2</sup>Decree of November 9, 1793; cited in ibid., 76-77.

<sup>3</sup>Matters reached such a head that on November 22, a completely new committee of surveillance was established through friendships which the deputies had made. This new body was more vicious than its predecessor, and was under the control of Peyrend d'Hervel, a former secretary of Georges Couthon. It never communicated with the deputies and, by a decree of November 23, did not even allow interviews on behalf of the imprisoned.

ceased after the Convention had imposed trade embargoes by the decrees of April 11 and June 22, 1793.<sup>1</sup> On November 18, the deputies lifted the embargo, subject to the Convention's approval.<sup>2</sup> Tallien and Ysabeau claimed that the people were inactive due to commercial stagnation and, since activity appeared to be a prime republican virtue, they expected mendicants and idlers to disappear when the embargo was lifted. They also hoped that money speculation would be stopped if no opportunity for its use existed.

The same day (November 18), a letter was directed to the Committee of Public Safety. The reasons for the embargo repeal were expressed, and the deputies assured the Paris group that the precautions they would take after the repeal would prevent both suspects and French produce from leaving the country.<sup>3</sup> Tallien and Ysabeau also recommended a plan for the utilization of certain funds which had been previously allocated to the department for the purchase of wheat and flour.<sup>4</sup> This plan was expected to satisfy Bordeaux and all of central France in regard to the problem of provisions and foodstuffs. The food shortage had been a powerful weapon in the hands of France's enemies, but the people had borne the famine with incredible patience. Nevertheless, grain and flour had to come into the city without delay; the Committee must recognize this problem and act upon it rapidly.

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<sup>1</sup>Decrees of April 11 and June 22, 1793; Duvergier, Décrets et Lois, V, 246, 350.

<sup>2</sup>Decree of November 18, 1793; cited in Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 87-88.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, November 18, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VIII, 538-540.

<sup>4</sup>The plan had been described in great detail in a letter to the Committee of Public Safety on November 16. See ibid., VIII, 470-473.

Despite the food shortage, Bordeaux had maintained its spirit. The section meetings had been proscribed, and everyone outwardly submitted to the deputies' decrees. The military commission and the committee of surveillance were operating with great efficiency. The entire administration, in fact, was a smooth working organization although there were still some rough spots in the city. The representatives admitted as much when they wrote that the aristocrats in Bordeaux detested them, and were contributing to the same sort of pressure which had been built up through the initial period of siege three months before.

Upon receipt of this letter, the Committee again damned the operations of Tallien and Ysabeau.<sup>1</sup> Yes, it wearily agreed, the needs and duties of the deputies made it imperative to take measures similar to those outlined by the two men. But, the deputies had oversimplified the problem. The matter of subsistences and the embargo were thorny subjects, and Tallien and Ysabeau must realize this. The Committee always had the interests of the entire Republic at heart, the letter continued, and one commune had to relegate its own satisfaction to that of France.

If there was free passage of merchandise, who could assure the Republic that the merchants would adhere to the law? They did not, after all, have the nation's interest at heart. The Committee questioned the wisdom of raising the embargo, and it declared further that merchandise could not be taken from France. Such a loss would disturb the public life, sustain the food shortage, and deprive France of the riches which belonged to her. It was agreed, however, that commerce

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the deputies at Bordeaux, no date; *ibid.*, VIII, 540-541.



had to be improved. The suggestions made by the deputies would be weighed, the Committee concluded, but it confidently expected the representatives to adjust their beliefs to the program of the Committee.

For the time being, the two Bordeaux representatives disregarded this reply from Paris, and began to derive an income from the penalties which they were exacting from the populace. Bordeaux had been given a unique position among all of the cities struck by the terror, and the deputies intended to capitalize on this. Before the Revolution, the city had had a rich nobility. This class had vanished, but a rich middle class still existed and wielded considerable influence. The deputies drew a rich source of income from them, less anxious to shed blood than to obtain money. Judgments were made in proportion to the wealth of the detained person.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that these fines levied by the commission militaire were fully supported by Tallien and Ysabeau.

During the third week of November, 1793, a temporary respite was given to the Bordelais. This reprieve would be short lived, however, since special agents of the Committee and the executive council were in the area and, if too much relaxation occurred, an investigation would certainly ensue. Ysabeau, especially, showed great resentment towards these agents. The new emissaries exerted themselves only by right of the saber, he exclaimed.

With "spies" active in the area, the commission militaire began to step up its operations. It strengthened its allegiance with the

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<sup>1</sup>A prime example of this was the arrest of the four Rabas brothers, merchants, who received their lives for 500,000 livres, four-fifths of which went to the treasury, and the rest to the sans-culottes. These men were Jews, and Wallon suggests that their religion suffered under the Terror. See Wallon, Les Représentants en Mission, II, 203.

committee of surveillance and, with the deputies' support, set about capturing and trying counter-revolutionaries. The confidence which the representatives of the people had in the commission was expressed in a letter sent to the Paris Jacobins on November 19. Apologizing to the Club for not having written sooner, the deputies claimed that a resurgence of federalists in the Bordeaux area had made it impossible to write.<sup>1</sup> The commission had been in operation and, in fact, had just returned from its revolutionary rounds. It had punished the conspirators in a harsh manner. This was always the conduct of the group in regard to enemies of the state.

Well aware of the penalties for moderates, Tallien and Ysabeau displayed their true sentiments to the Club. They too had executed conspirators, while urging the sans-culottes to accept the benefits of the Revolution from the confiscated properties of the recently deposed and hated intriguers. Further demonstrating their revolutionary ardor, the deputies reported that they assisted in planting a liberty tree each day somewhere in the area. Though they realized that these plantings appeared juvenile to the Jacobins, many people were attracted to the spectacles and became receptive, as they watched, to the revolutionary oratory. If the Jacobins desired to see evidences of blood, however, Tallien supplied this in declaring: "Afin que l'arbre de la liberte jette de profundis racines, il faut que le pied en soit arrosé par le sang des fédéralistes et les aristocrates."<sup>2</sup> The pendulum had swung from moderation to excess.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Jacobins Club, November 19, 1793; Réimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 554-555.

<sup>2</sup>Speech by Tallien, no date; cited in Bernadau, Histoire de Bordeaux, 189.

Though it appears that the revolution was becoming more excessive every day, it is significant that the Bordeaux citizens thought highly of Tallien and Ysabeau at the height of the terror. Many letters and documents attest to the support which the deputies had.<sup>1</sup> It was due to the courage and wisdom, but especially the energy of Tallien and his colleague, these letters said, that the department's safety rested. Once these men were replaced, virtue and confidence would be destroyed. The deputies, when later accused of moderation, would point to these testimonials of popular faith.

Although Tallien always knew what to do, which side to punish, and which to reward, he could still, if necessary, imprison suspects by the score each week. There was no hesitation, no equivocation in his work, and far too much cruel haste in it.<sup>2</sup> Under these circumstances the terror was maintained in Bordeaux, and became more repressive. Individual arrests no longer sufficed and, in order to fill the prisons, Tallien had the ingenious idea of a coup de filet. Rightly suspecting the actors in the Grande-Théâtre of being counter-revolutionary in their predilections and, certain that the bourgeoisie who attended the theater held similar beliefs, he gave the order for the revolutionary army to leisurely arrest whomever they wanted to one night at a performance.<sup>3</sup> On November 28, consequently, eighty-six

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<sup>1</sup>For a representative gathering of this support see letters from the following: the Council-General of Bordeaux to the National Convention, November 11, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXVIII, 607-608; Journal de la Montagne, No. 162, November 11, 1793, cited in ibid., LXXXIII, 662; Letter of November 2, 1793 read in the Convention December 3; ibid., LXXX, 561; and letter from the municipality of Bourg to the Convention, November 26, 1793; ibid., LXXXI, 5.

<sup>2</sup>J. Mills Whitham, Men and Women of the French Revolution (New York, 1933), 195.

<sup>3</sup>Wallon, Les Représentants en Mission, II, 211.

actors were arrested while the audience was thoroughly combed for aristocrats. Two days later, Tallien wrote to the minister of the interior that the theater had been "un foyer d'aristocratie," but "nous l'avions détruit."<sup>1</sup>

On the night the theater was searched, two hundred merchants were arrested, their papers were sealed, and their fate left to the military commission. Those who said that Bordeaux was in a state of moderation were wrong: the guillotine was still in operation. It was, indeed, this early work of Tallien which offended Robespierre so much for its excessiveness.

It was during the latter part of November and the early days of December 1793, when everything was in readiness for the Fête de la Raison, the tribute to reason and virtue, that the whisperings of Tallien's enemies gathered impetus. To fully understand the reasons for this, some background is important. In addition to stripping the churches of their precious metals for the fete, republican agents often went to the homes of wealthy merchants to obtain any silver or gold plate which might be volunteered for the Republic. On November 25, agents seized at the home of the citizen Cabarrus all of the silver which had any tint of the ancien régime attached to it.

It was through this incident that Jean-Lambert Tallien met Teresa Cabarrus, only recently divorced from the Marquis de Fontenay.<sup>2</sup> Her early life is of no concern here, for only the four months passed in

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Minister of the Interior, November 30, 1793; Reimp. Moniteur, XVIII, 641.

<sup>2</sup>There are at least three monographs on the life of Teresa Cabarrus, all of interest. Louis Gastine, La Belle Tallien, notre dame de Septembre (Paris, n.d.); Paul Reboux, Une Merveilleuse: Mme. Tallien (Paris, 1928); and Joseph Turquan, La Citoyenne Tallien (Paris, n.d.).

Bordeaux as Tallien's mistress had a bearing upon his recall to Paris. In any case, soon after the revolutionary agents had called upon her brother, Teresa went to see Tallien. She thought perhaps he might remember meeting her four years earlier in Paris at the salon of Mme. Lebrun.<sup>1</sup> He received her very cordially, and promised a complete restitution of all the goods taken by his men.

The agents of the proconsul, not so smitten with the lady's charms, arrested her anyway. Again playing upon the susceptible nature of Tallien, Teresa tried her wiles upon him. Her freedom was assured that very first night she was in prison, for she slept with the leader of her tormentors, Tallien.<sup>2</sup> Before the end of the first décade in Frimaire, Teresa Cabarrus was the mistress of Tallien. She had completely disarmed him "with her first glance, and with her little hands had turned aside the lightning which was setting the Gironde ablaze."<sup>3</sup>

The remainder of Tallien's proconsulship in Bordeaux is wholly tied in with the future Mme. Tallien. She rapidly became the intermediary of all those citizens seeking freedom from revolutionary justice and, as Whitham states:

She had a bureau de graces; made of herself a committee of mercy, always pained at the thought of misery, imprisonment, death, wanting to be happy and to disseminate happiness, to exercise her power and amiability.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G. Lenotre, pseud. of Louis Gosselin, Romances of the French Revolution, tr. by Fred. Lee (London, 1908), I, 145.

<sup>2</sup>Whitham, Men and Women, 197.

<sup>3</sup>Lenotre, Romances, 145.

<sup>4</sup>Whitham, Men and Women, 198.

Though she undoubtedly had made a great impression upon the pro-consul, there are indications that he was tiring of the bloodletting in Bordeaux. In a letter to the Committee of Public Safety on November 30, he suggests that he is not as capable in the performance of his duty as he was earlier.<sup>1</sup> (This letter was written before he really had any opportunity of knowing Teresa intimately). "Citizen colleagues," he pleaded, "replace me as soon as possible, or procure the means which will allow me two weeks in Paris." Tallien understood the significance of his position but, he said, Ysabeau had need of a new and active partner and he, Tallien, could not fill the need.<sup>2</sup> Since the Bordeaux mission was one of the most delicate and difficult missions to fill, he urged the Committee to choose someone who could conquer the "intrigue, the disgusting calumny, and a system ... which defames all that is patriotic and revolutionary." Otherwise, all but the most zealous republicans would be discouraged.

In spite of the testimony in her favor, conjecture must be offered as to whether or not Teresa really had a sufficient enough effect over Tallien to induce him to relax the terror. The note to the Committee seems to indicate that he was more than just a willing contributor to the lessening of the terror regime in Bordeaux.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, November 30, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, IX, 70-71.

<sup>2</sup>He mentioned that Brival, another deputy on mission in the area, had promised to remain with Ysabeau while he was gone.

<sup>3</sup>Turquan claims in La Citoyenne Tallien that in the three months, October, November, and December, before Tallien had known Teresa well, there were forty-seven citizens put to death, and forty-three fined. From January to February 22, the day Tallien left Bordeaux, twenty-six were condemned to death while thirty-seven were fined; a complete reversal of form. How much is owed to Teresa is unknown, although the evidence seems to support her. See Turquan, 112.

Nevertheless, the tidal wave of terror continued in Paris, Bordeaux, and France. On 14 Frimaire, the date of the Terror Constitution, Robert Lindet, for the Committee of Public Safety, ordered Tallien and Ysabeau to prevent denunciations from reaching the citizen Lamarque, a servant of the Navy Ministry. This Lamarque was in active correspondence with the minister, Lindet wrote, "which gives an ... idea of his capacity, vigilance, and honesty."<sup>1</sup> If he was denounced, the deputies were urged to investigate. To Tallien and Ysabeau, this letter indicated that they were being suspected of maintaining a lax discipline over the Bordelais troublemakers.<sup>2</sup> They both realized that, in spite of the passage of the law of 14 Frimaire, the terror could not be too greatly tempered in their province.

The two representatives in Bordeaux,<sup>3</sup> however, took this opportunity to suppress the military rule, and placed Bordeaux under the common law. This compared to the previous rule proved to be much more popular with the citizens. Basically, this moderate act was owed much more to the conciliatory attitude of the two men than to the events of the time. The two, so often and, until then, so unjustly accused of moderation, were less inclined to use the unlimited power with which they had been invested. As Wallon declares: "Ysabeau was not by

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the deputies from Robert Lindet, December 4, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, IX, 188-189.

<sup>2</sup>It should be borne in mind that the Convention had never, officially speaking, decreed the sending of a particular mission to Bordeaux. Tallien was expected to raise the levee en masse in the departments of Gironde and Dordogne; and Ysabeau was merely a representative to the army of the Pyrenees occidentales. Nevertheless, these two represented the Convention at Bordeaux, and were recognized in a semi-official manner. Ibid., IX, n. 187.

<sup>3</sup>Lindet claimed that the letter was no reflection on the success of the deputies. It was merely a request for them to clear up all the counter-revolutionists and denunciators. Ibid., IX, 189.

nature ferocious, and Tallien found himself singularly tamed by ..., the beautiful Teresa Cabarrus."<sup>1</sup>

With the abatement of the terror in December of 1793, there were also indications that the grain scarcity might be alleviated. On December 7, the Committee of Public Safety raised the grain embargo provided that all grain transactions remained within the bounds set by them.<sup>2</sup> Wheat might now be obtained for the starving Bordelais, but it came slowly and in insignificant amounts to the famished city.

The following day (December 8) in Paris, a deputation from Bordeaux made a plea for renewed Convention faith in Tallien and Ysabeau.<sup>3</sup> Humbly requesting that the two representatives of the people be sustained at their posts, the delegates asked "what would have become of us if not for the prudence exercised by the representatives?" They reiterated, what if the deputies were taken away now?

It is to their writings, their talks in the popular society and all public places that we owe revolutionary elements ... If we are beginning to know the Mountain well, ... if we are instilled with respect and love for those ... to whom we principally owe the Republic, thanks should be given to your delegates who, in all circumstances, show themselves worthy of the mission you have confided in them.<sup>4</sup>

Anyone who referred to moderation in Bordeaux lied; he obviously knew nothing of the true facts. The Convention must now reject any talk of Tallien and Ysabeau's moderate attitude.

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<sup>1</sup>Wallon, Les Représentants en Mission, II, 217-218.

<sup>2</sup>Decree of the Committee of Public Safety, December 7, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, IX, 234.

<sup>3</sup>Speech of the Bordelais delegation to the Convention, December 8, 1793; Archives Parlementaires, LXXXI, 110.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., LXXXI, 110.



This report was given due consideration by the Committee and, three days later, a vote of confidence was received by the deputies in a tersely worded letter from the Committee: "Continue to march with vigor in the popular cause; get close to the people; the most imposing arm in serving them will be the dignity of your character; your actions, there is your most beautiful glory."<sup>1</sup>

Any leniency which the deputies had shown might be ascribed to the fears which they held regarding some of their actions. As most men placed in a position of high authority, they had received letters from would-be assassins. These letters promised bodily harm to the Conventionnels because they represented the restrictive state. Things reached such frenzy by December 13, that Tallien was attacked and almost murdered by five men. Surprisingly enough, he held no rancor toward his assailants and, though wounded, he refused to press an investigation.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the military commission pursued a full investigation, discovered nothing of certainty, but arrested and tried five suspects alleged to be the men sought after.<sup>3</sup>

By December 19, the deputies had relaxed the terror to such an extent that the military government was relieved of its command.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the deputies, December 11, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, IX, 327. This Convention support came at the conclusion of a request for aid in the fighting against the Toulonnais rebels.

<sup>2</sup>Vivie intimates that Tallien knew the assailants. The question arises as to whether or not the attack was really a fraud, or an honest attempt at murder. See Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 138.

<sup>3</sup>See decree promulgated by Lacombe for the commission militaire, December 16, 1793; Réimp. Moniteur, XIX, 17-18.

<sup>4</sup>Tallien and Ysabeau decreed on this date that circumstances which had made them create a revolutionary army no longer existed; the citizens of Bordeaux and the Gironde had recognized the Convention's authority; and if the malelovents still existed within the area, they would be contained by the two revolutionary committees. Whereas once a military government existed, now a revolutionary administration, conforming to the decrees of the Convention, was to be supported. Decree of December 19, 1793; cited in Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 145.

Tallien was endeavoring to instill in the minds of the Bordelais a picture of his great benevolence while, at the same time, he did not wish to offend the Convention of the Committee. Eager to preserve this delicate balance, both deputies sent word to the Convention that, though accused of moderation, they had accomplished important revolutionary deeds. Grangeneuve, the ex-Girondin, had been arrested and executed along with his brother. Bujac, a merchant, Daguyon, a monopolist, and a General Gestas, a federalist sympathizer, they said, had all been discovered and punished through the efforts of the sans-culottes.<sup>1</sup> Praising the burgeoning public spirit, the deputies lauded the operations of both the committee of surveillance and the commission militaire.

In spite of the feeling of ill-will which the deputies felt engendered towards them, they still desired to function within some framework of the national government. But they rightly feared that the line between Paris and Bordeaux had reached its maximum tenseness. Despite the number of testimonials which the deputies could display to their credit, they were obviously coming under closer and closer examination by the Paris Committee and the Convention. Though subsistences had been promised to the Bordelais, the city still suffered from famine, and the deputies were no longer willing to accept the responsibility for future events in Bordeaux. They were willing to support the government, but aid had to come soon.

On December 22, the deputies also dispatched a letter to the Committee. Writing that they had heard of the defamatory statements being spread about their Montagnard brothers and themselves, and vigorously

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Convention, December 22, 1793; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, IX, 593.

refuting this "reward" for their unselfish services, they commented that they had incurred the hatred of foreign agents and the men who never left the relative safety of the War Bureau. These last were either aristocrats or jealous office-seekers. In an effort to preserve their self-respect Tallien and Ysabeau essayed to erase any hostile feelings against them.

We call on authoritative facts, to our numerous arrests, ... to the chastisement of all the guilty, to the regeneration ... of constituted authorities, commerce, shipping, the [national] club ... all of which influence public opinion.<sup>1</sup>

The deputies then asserted that the Committee would be astonished at the immensity of the revolutionary work accomplished.

It is actually surprising how well the representatives understood the political climate of the day. Constantly aware of the pressure which was being exerted upon them, both by the Bordelais and the Parisians, Tallien and Ysabeau now tried to steer a middle course to alienate the least number of people. Both men had finally realized that provincial people could not be made cosmopolitan overnight and, as much as the Committee desired this of Bordeaux, it was simply an impossible task. The Bordelais were not as revolutionary sophisticated as the Parisians were. Coupled with this difficulty was the belief that they were under suspicion in Paris as moderates. While extending the terror would not serve any purpose to the Bordelais, not killing would only make the Paris radicals more eager to dispose of Tallien and Ysabeau.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, December 22, 1793; ibid., IX, 592-593.

It was Tallien who drew most of the criticism from Paris. His scandalous and open liaison with Teresa had aroused the ire and, perhaps the jealousy of his colleagues. His reluctance to use the guillotine more often also annoyed the Maratistes who played a leading role in Parisian politics. Both Tallien and Ysabeau tried to defend themselves through their actions during January and February of 1794.

On December 30, France celebrated the successful dispelling of the English troops from Toulon. On this day, a fête was held in Bordeaux at the temple of reason, and Teresa Cabarrus, acknowledged mistress of Tallien, orated on the virtues and beauties of national education.<sup>1</sup> Even Teresa was doing everything she could do to refute the accusations of moderation which were directed against her lover. His enemies, however, gathered strength. On January 6, Tallien received an anonymous letter which warned of an assassination attempt:

... Take care, you are ... surrounded.  
You have escaped the ... assassins, watch  
out for poison. Some hypocrites, some men  
sold to your enemies are near you, eating  
with you while they slander you from be-  
hind. Believe it when it is told to you.<sup>2</sup>

Tallien's reaction to this note is characteristic of his strange personality. Completely disregarding his personal safety he claimed that the national representation "was being debased and made to look ridiculous."<sup>3</sup> He and Ysabeau did not take the letter seriously, and made no attempt to further safeguard their persons. They did, however, attempt to restore national prestige by enforcing surveillance of suspects.

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<sup>1</sup>Discours sur l'Education, par la Citoyenne Theresia Cabarrus; cited in Turquan, La Citoyenne Tallien, 323-328.

<sup>2</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 162.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., II, 162.

While the Bordelais went hungry, Tallien continued to live in a high style. He drew increasing criticism from Parisian circles, and from Robespierre in particular who could not approve or understand the self-indulgence which Tallien and the other deputies on mission displayed in their respective departments.

It is most probable that Robespierre did not understand the action taken by the Bordeaux deputies on the last day of the year, 1793. By a provision in the law of 14 Frimaire, the deputies believed that the Bordelais committees of surveillance and subsistences, and the commission militaire were all to be arbitrarily suppressed by the Committee.<sup>1</sup> Without these groups, the deputies protested, "order within Bordeaux would be compromised."<sup>2</sup> Whether the two deputies desired discipline for the Republic or for their own safety is not clear.

On January 7 Tallien, still hoping to please the Convention, as indeed his life depended upon it, established a four man commission to investigate the mercantile banks. This commission operated under the conviction that trade and commerce could only be revived through enforcement of the law of the "maximum." In addition, the English blockade had ruined the Bordelais commerce, and what little commerce remained had been smashed by the terror. This commission would have to take severe measures immediately to resolve this problem.

Two days after the initial steps taken by Tallien to revive the Gironde's economy, he wrote to the Committee that he just uncovered a

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the deputies, no date, Aulard, Recueil des Actes, VIII, 540-541.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the Convention, December 31, 1793; ibid., IX, 786-787.

new plot against the Republic.<sup>1</sup> The merchants had falsified their account books and ledgers, and a sudden investigation of these books had made these négociants appear foolish and unpatriotic. The merchants could give no reason for their actions, and Tallien requested the Committee to approve all of the recent edicts directed at these men in Bordeaux.

All revolutionary measures in Bordeaux had been executed with dispatch, but this could not be sustained if the ban on the two committees and the commission was upheld, Tallien cautioned. He next reported that the subsistence problem had been solved. Provisions were abundant since all of the neighboring departments (Lot-et-Garonne, Vienne, Deux-Sèvres), were coming to the aid of Bordeaux, and the public spirit, consequently, was excellent.<sup>2</sup> The spirit was high, too, for other reasons, he declared. "Liberty and reason had deadened fanaticism and superstition, ... the churches were closed; the popular society, the temple of reason and the meetings of ... authorities are the only churches which are frequented...." (The Hebertiste idea of church suppression had, apparently, found a disciple in Tallien).

To the Convention the same day Tallien dispatched a letter with essentially the same news, "the commission militaire is still felling heads and the committee of surveillance was still arresting all the suspects...."<sup>3</sup> Finally, he added, "we are able to say that Bordeaux

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, January 9, 1794; ibid., X, 145-147.

<sup>2</sup>In regard to this statement, Vivie declares that provisions were actually quite scarce and, rather than being in a "golden age," Bordeaux was in a state of misery. Tallien was lying, most likely to establish amicable relations with the Committee and the Convention. Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 165.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to the Convention, January 9, 1794; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, X, 147.

is regenerating itself, and that with courage we will be able to render this city entirely to the purity of republican principles."

With the start of the new year much of the history of Bordeaux was set forth in a series of letters between the deputies, the Convention, and the Committee. On January 11, the Committee of Public Safety approved the deputies' ideas of grain buying, provided all the proper precautions were observed.<sup>1</sup> They also allotted four million livres to be given to the captains of wheat-bearing vessels. During the next two months the Committee sought to provision the Gironde and the remainder of France by relaxing the embargo and opening the channels of trade with neutral nations. On January 14, the deputies informed the Committee that the captains of American vessels held in the Bordeaux harbor since the previous August were demanding damages for embargo-imposed rotting of their cargoes.<sup>2</sup> (It must be remembered that it took almost a week for letters to reach their destination in revolutionary France, hence the seeming overlap of authority). The Americans had claimed that they were neutral, and should not be hampered in their trade by the French. But, Tallien asked, what is the status of neutrals? This, as many other questions asked of the Committee, remained unanswered.

For the next two weeks little is known of the affairs at Bordeaux. During this period, the deputies were striving to create a public opinion which might prove useful if they were asked to account for their actions in Bordeaux and, though the operations of the commission

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<sup>1</sup>Decree of the Committee of Public Safety, January 11, 1794; ibid., X, 185.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the Convention, January 14, 1794; ibid., X, 250-251.

militaire and the guillotine continued, there was a gradual lessening of the terror. There are also some indications that Teresa had succeeded in persuading Tallien to relax the terror.

Simultaneously, the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety were busily attempting to ameliorate the grain shortages in the departments, defining the status of neutrals, and preparing the prosecution for the "excessive and indulgent" deputies, of which Tallien was a conspicuous example. On January 26, it confirmed the actions of the deputies in regard to their actions against the Bordelais merchants. We must closely watch these businessmen, the Committee asserted, since they are unable to raise themselves to the heights of republicanism.<sup>1</sup> These rich and selfish merchants were getting their just desserts for counting the people so little. It was clear that the Committee was delighted with the deputies' report of popular zeal and prudence in Bordeaux. It had obviously not yet read the recent dispatches of the deputies in regard to the law of 14 Frimaire. Before a month had elapsed Tallien was to return to Paris to face a furious Committee of Public Safety, a disgruntled Convention, and a Robespierre bent on vengeance.

On February 3, the Committee replied to the proconsul's letter of December 31 (*supra*, p. 75). Noting that Tallien and Ysabeau had nullified a Convention decree of their own accord, the Committee declared that it would have to refresh the memory of the deputies on matters of principle.<sup>2</sup> With this in mind, the Committee stated that the deputies

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the representatives at Bordeaux, January 26, 1794; *ibid.*, X, 465.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the deputies, February 3, 1794; *ibid.*, X, 643-645.



were now openly suspected of moderation. "Assumed that the law of 14 Frimaire<sup>1</sup> was contrary to some one of your measures - was it not impolitic to suspend the law in its entirety...?" The Bordeaux representatives did not understand that "the continual suspension of decrees by local deputies had imprinted upon the National Convention a taint of imperiousness, of lightness, which upsets the public confidence, devoids the respect which the laws should obtain, and permits intriguers perpetual incertitude on the Revolution's results, and on the stability of the government," the letter asserted.

In rising indignation, the Committee declared that it could not understand how the law conflicted with the measures taken in Bordeaux. Though agreeing that the deputies knew best by experience and proximity (a major concession by the Committee), the Paris group still argued that when the government felt the necessity to legislate for prompt action to halt public misdemeanors, it should be obeyed. The deputies in Bordeaux had openly defied the Paris government, the Convention, and the people. The Committee accused the deputies of insubordination, and sought to destroy any self-confidence which they might still have. "Is this not a dangerous incoherence of opinion and conduct," the Committee asked. "Is it not political deviation," it demanded to know. In conclusion, the Committee recommended a complete reassessment of the Bordelais situation. In this manner, the deputies might yet prove themselves worthy of the trust bestowed upon them.

This letter had not yet been received when Tallien and Ysabeau purged the committee of surveillance on February 4. Its members were

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<sup>1</sup>Decree of the National Convention, 14 Frimaire (December 4, 1793); Duvergier, Décrets et Lois, VI, 317-322.

arrested, and a commission was named to investigate their actions.<sup>1</sup> On the following day, the deputies explained their conduct to the Convention. It was time to strike this blow, they asserted in an open letter, for intriguers had infiltrated the committee and, under the guise of patriotism, had persecuted the true patriots, disseminating discouragement and terror throughout the city.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, this body had been too arbitrary, had violated the national laws and, worse still, had not communicated with the representatives on mission. (The long resentment which Tallien and Ysabeau nursed against Peyrend d'Hervel came out into the open through this purge). The committee of surveillance had held no trials, and had treated its prisoners barbarously. "One can weigh the air which the prisoners are permitted to breathe; the sick were deprived of all aid or skill, and some died for lack of attention." (All of these horrors had gone completely unnoticed for four months by Tallien who had, apparently, given his consent to the barbarous treatment of the counter-revolutionist prisoners). In any case, the Committee could rest assured that the newly comprised committee of surveillance could be composed of more humanitarian and republican figures.

The deputies next wrote of their unswerving patriotism. "Faithful to our duties," they declared, "we will ... pursue all the enemies of liberty. Their heads ... will fall on the scaffold ... and we ask that they treat us with the same respect if we swerve from the line of principles...." The deputies concluded by stating that, far from dis-

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<sup>1</sup>Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 167.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the Convention, February 5, 1794; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, X, 717-719.

obeying the laws of the Convention, they had conformed entirely to its decrees.

Letters were now flying fast and furious between Paris and Bordeaux. On February 8, the Committee sought to correct the mistaken impression which the deputies in Bordeaux had of the law of 14 Frimaire. The law did not deaden the revolutionary establishments in Bordeaux as the representatives had complained. Rather, it was for the deputy now to execute all of the Convention directives within the abilities of the established bodies.<sup>1</sup> It would appear that Paris was giving the representatives a loose hand, but this was only a palliative: soon Tallien would be recalled and questioned by the Paris Jacobins.

Five days later, Tallien bitterly acknowledged the Committee's letter of February 3 (supra, p. 78).<sup>2</sup> He was discouraged to read the reproaches it contained for Ysabeau and he did not deserve them. "Our conduct, in the course of this ... mission ..., should have proven that we were the most scrupulous observers of your decrees." The Committee had to realize, Tallien asserted, that if the revolutionary government had not been established here more rapidly, it was because it was not the thing to do. Endorsing the will of the national government as his own, Tallien claimed that he was injured to believe that the Committee suspected Ysabeau and him of opposing national sovereignty. This, he averred, was simply untrue. Indeed, "we will never deviate from these principles or our duties - if you order, we will obey." Apparently aware that his day of reckoning was approaching,

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to the deputies, February 8, 1794; ibid., X, 779.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the Committee of Public Safety, February 13, 1794; ibid., XI, 128-129.

Tallien defiantly stated that neither he nor Ysabeau would return to the Convention before the sans-culotte regime had conquered in Bordeaux.

After this hasty apology for his actions, Tallien spoke of the reorganization of the committees of subsistence and surveillance, and the commission militaire. The public spirit had risen not because of a prolonged terror but, rather, to an impartial justice administered wisely and with reflection. In his last statement, the proconsul complained about the lack of provisions, an almost daily occurrence. (This was in sharp contrast to his statements of January 9, supra, p. 76). "The crisis," he now said, "is difficult.... The people suffer with exemplary patience. In many communes the citizens are reduced to a quarter pound of bad bread a day...."<sup>1</sup>

The following day, the Committee attacked Tallien for his edict of February 5 which had reconstituted the committee of surveillance. Furious at the lack of respect shown to it, the Committee baldly denounced the deputy for passing this type of decree on his own initiative.<sup>2</sup> Independence for the deputies was unthinkable now. Instead, strict control and centralization which was to be enforced through the new national agent came into full fruition. The battle lines were drawn. The deputies at Bordeaux could do nothing right in the eyes of

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<sup>1</sup>Sénart writes in his memoirs about the bread problem: "While he [Tallien] reduced the people of Bordeaux to misery by making distributions of bread only twice a week, each distribution being only four ounces of bread, five ounces of rice or chestnuts, Tallien affected the sumptuousness of a potentate: they baked for him bread whiter than the snow, and the people called it the representative's bread." See Memoirs de Sénart, 199 ff., cited in P.-J.-B. Buchez and P.-C. Roux, Histoire Parlementaire de la révolution française ou Journal des Assemblées Nationales depuis 1789 jusqu'en 1815 (40 volumes, Paris, 1834-1838), XXXII, 426.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to the deputies, February 14, 1794; Aulard, Recueil des Actes, XI, 427.

Paris when, in fact, they constantly exceeded their authority.

In a few days Tallien would leave for Paris convinced in his own heart that this was the only way in which he could save his life. The rumors of his prodigal life had spread to Paris where it dismayed many patriots. News had also filtered in of Tallien's favoritism to the wealthy royalists, of bribes he had taken, of his luxury, and of his affair with Teresa. It was because of her, the rumor mongers said, that Tallien had showed moderation in the face of the revolution. Robespierre and the Committee were becoming restless; Danton and Hebert were fighting for their lives, and rumors flew in abundance of the clean sweep which Robespierre was going to make to bring virtue, his virtue, to France. In a few months, the Jacobin purges were to deeply split the ranks of the revolutionists.

Until the end of his proconsulship, Tallien sought to create a climate of opinion favorable to him. Both he and Ysabeau fought to halt the terror, but due to the political intrigues, the squabbling among the devoted revolutionists within Bordeaux, and the fear that too much moderation might bring the hand of the Committee down upon them more rapidly than they might expect, their expressions of relaxation were stop gap. The former members of the committee of surveillance began to attack Tallien for his moderation, while he left Bordeaux on February 22, possibly days or hours before his arrest was ordered by the Paris body.

It is interesting to note what Tallien states in letters which Sénart, a member of the Committee of General Security (the secret police of revolutionary France), claims to have had in his possession.

These words are the most incriminating factors against Tallien for they are in the terrorists own writing. He says in one of these letters, in regard to his enmity towards the Girondins: "Je ne regrette que de ne pouvoir les tuer de ma propre main, je trouverais du plaisir à frapper un girondin moi-même."<sup>1</sup> Sénart continues: "During the reign of Tallien ... the imprisoned suffered the greatest cruelties in the prison of Blaye: they were crowded together in their unhealthy places, some on straw or dunghills, others on the ground, still others in mudholes; in Bordeaux they were thrown into infected places without any aid ...; and Tallien always said: 'De quoi ont-ils besoin la veille de leur mort?'"<sup>2</sup>

It is thus apparent that Tallien's acts, or inaction, had made him many enemies. His scandalous behavior with Teresa Cabarrus had aroused the antagonism of those moralists who decried the open affair with a known prostitute, the daughter of a banker to the King of Spain. Robespierre found this particularly distasteful. Denunciations had flooded the Committee of Public Safety from the disgruntled Bordelais who saw in Tallien an extension of the hated and feared intendant of the ancien régime. Widows and relatives of the condemned complained to Paris of the arbitrariness of his judgments, of his acceptance of bribes, and of his complete insincerity.

Accused of moderation, excessiveness, licentiousness, and unworthiness of being a revolutionist, Tallien finally left Bordeaux in mid-February of 1794. Teresa was left behind, possibly because he

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<sup>1</sup>Memoirs de Senart, 199 ff.; cited in Buchez and Roux, Histoire Parlementaire, XXXII, 427.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., XXXII, 428.

thought her safer there or because he honestly felt that he would return once he had restored faith in himself. But the swift turn of events cast him into another role, that of Robespierre's adversary at the Convention and the Jacobins Club.

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Fully determined to justify himself before the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety, Tallien was greeted at the capital during the last week in February by other agents who had also returned to re-establish themselves in the good graces of the Mountain. In Paris, he found it impossible to approach the Committee because its members were "so overburdened with work that one can scarcely approach them."<sup>1</sup> After several unsuccessful attempts to obtain a hearing, Tallien realized that time was running out and, unless he acted quickly, he would soon be tried and executed by the revolutionary tribunal.

Scarcely three weeks later, he was able to appear at the rostrum of the Convention, where he vigorously defended his actions at Bordeaux.<sup>2</sup> Why were all of the representatives on mission the butt of persecution, he asked. He had been accused of improper actions at Bordeaux. But this commune had been a principal stronghold of federalism and, if he had not acted as he did, the city would have felt destruction in the same manner that Lyon had been destroyed. Thanks to his prudence and good sense, Bordeaux had returned to its rightful place in the republican ranks without any excess bloodletting. This

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Tallien to Ysabeau, March 3, 1794. Archives de la Gironde, serie L; cited in Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, II, 188.

<sup>2</sup>Speech before the Convention, March 12, 1794; Réimp. Moniteur, XIX, 693-694.

was not moderation; it was just common sense. "We have uprooted federalism; we have restored the courage of the patriots; ... we have pursued aristocrats, federalists and, in fact, all of the suspects. We should then be denounced by their partisans; our hopes have not been in vain," he asserted.

Malicious lies had been spread about Ysabeau and him, he protested. His enemies had even accused them of trying to escape to America aboard a ship containing untold riches. This was as ridiculous as the claim that Bordeaux was in counter-revolution, while suspects promenaded and patriots were oppressed. Ysabeau had written to Tallien, and had supported him in his opinion.<sup>1</sup> The intriguers were not in Bordeaux; they were in Paris denouncing the Bordelais deputies.

Becoming humble in the den of his persecutors, Tallien was almost self-righteous now. If the lies only concerned him, he would not have appeared before the Convention. But, these calumnies were spread by men who wished to lose Bordeaux to the enemy, and the inhabitants of this city must be defended. "Bordeaux is entirely for the republic," he claimed. No matter how much the government requested in the form of vessels, stores, or merchandise, Bordeaux would gladly support it. To keep this loyalty, however, the Convention would have to send more provisions into the city and the department. The people were still starving, in spite of all that Ysabeau and he had done.

Tallien declared in conclusion that he did not dread a complete investigation of his conduct at Bordeaux, on the contrary, he requested it. "I impatiently wait for the moment when I will be able to make ...

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Ysabeau to Tallien, n.d., ibid., XIX, 694.



a report on our operations, and ... of the immense amount of work we have accomplished through our activity."

The effect of his speech was as great as he had intended. The Convention immediately declared that subsistences should be sent to the department of Bec-d'Ambès, and that Tallien's conduct should be examined before the Committee of Public Safety and of General Security.<sup>1</sup> His words made some of the suspicion fall from his shoulders and, on 1 Germinal (March 22, 1794), he was elected President of the Convention. He presided over this body the day that Danton and Camille Desmoulins were executed "following the systematic program of Robespierre."<sup>2</sup> Before this date, though, Tallien's prestige had mounted anew when another letter from Ysabeau arrived in Paris (March 14), informing the Convention of the revived patriotism at Bordeaux.<sup>3</sup> The same day, Tallien appeared before the Jacobins Club and convinced them of his hatred for counter-revolutionaries. The laws had condemned these men, he said, and punishment must be meted out to all of these traitors.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this vibrant oratory, he was restored to full membership in the ranks of the Jacobins. He had seemingly convinced everyone of importance that he had fulfilled his mission to Bordeaux, and that this city was revolutionary secure for the Republic.

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<sup>1</sup>Decree of the National Convention, March 12, 1794; ibid., XIX, 694.

<sup>2</sup>Turquan, La Citoyenne Tallien, 122.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from Ysabeau to Tallien, n.d.; Réimp. Moniteur, XIX, 702-703.

<sup>4</sup>Speech before the Jacobins Club, March 14, 1794; Aulard, Société des Jacobins, V, 687-688.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### THERMIDOR AND THE LAST DAYS OF JEAN-LAMBERT TALLIEN

Although Tallien had regained some of his reputation among the revolutionary groups, he was painfully aware that Robespierre neither trusted nor respected him. The manner in which the Incorruptible had disposed of opponents such as Desmoulins, Danton, and soon Hebert, gave Tallien a terrible portent of the future. It was clear that Robespierre did not like Tallien despite the latter's recent lionization in Paris. Robespierre, virtuous and dedicated, had only scorn for Tallien, a man who had no character, "who bowed before a skirt and an écu, betraying one for the other."<sup>1</sup> Tallien, desperately trying to win favor at the Convention, began once more to attack the aristocrats and the moderates in France. But this did not raise him in Robespierre's estimation.

Throughout April and May of 1794, this antagonism between Tallien and Robespierre matured. The former deputy to the Gironde sought to reinstate himself with the "leader" of the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety, but all to no avail. Although Tallien ostensibly favored the arrest of the Dantonistes, including Desmoulins, he began to associate with those who had favored the cause of Danton, and who feared Robespierre and his virtue. Tallien found himself among such men as Fréron and Fouché, two of the most vicious former deputies

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<sup>1</sup>Turquan, La Citoyenne Tallien, 126.

on mission. Barras was also in this circle of disgruntled revolutionists who were disturbed at the turn of events, and afraid that Robespierre might soon dispense with all of the malcontents.

On 3 Prairial (May 22, 1794), Teresa Cabarrus, who had come to Paris seeking her lover and protector, was ordered arrested by the order of the Committee of Public Safety. On 7 Prairial, she and a "companion" were arrested, and put into prison.<sup>1</sup> She was arrested for non-fulfillment of the September 17, 1793 law which requested foreigners to remain outside of the coastal cities; she was Spanish and was in Paris! Besides this, Spain was at war with France.

This arrest, instigated by Robespierre, lit the bomb which exploded on 9 Thermidor (July 27, 1794). Although Tallien was implicated in the arrest of Teresa (he had apparently countersigned the decree), he vowed to avenge his mistress.<sup>2</sup> The deputies Freron and Fouché were now eager to join Tallien so long as their safety was guaranteed, and Robespierre was eliminated. Tallien no longer wasted his time on platitudinous phrases in trying to appease Robespierre.

On 22 Prairial (June 10, 1794) the law sponsored by Couthon, for the Committee of Public Safety, providing, among other things, for the arrest of any deputy by order of this Committee or that of General Security was introduced into the Convention. On the following day, several of the representatives, aware that their freedom of speech

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the citizen Boulanger on the execution of the decree 3 Prairial, of the Committee of Public Safety, 7 Prairial; ibid., 333-334.

<sup>2</sup>Turquan states that besides the signature of Charles Dumas, President of the Convention, and the six members of the Committee, there was one other signature approving Teresa's arrest, Tallien's. It seems that Teresa's "companion" was Jean Guéry, a young man of twenty years, and Tallien was jealous. Ibid., 135-137.

might be abridged, forced a vote and amended the law to read that a deputy could be arrested only by virtue of a decree of the entire assembly. On 24 Prairial, Robespierre and Couthon attacked the instigators of this forced amendment, singling out Tallien as a ring-leader of the recalcitrants. Tallien, in rebuttal, accused the members of the Committee of Public Safety of abusing their privileges by spying on him.<sup>1</sup> Robespierre angrily denied this charge, and asserted that Tallien's "facts were false, though it is true that Tallien is one of those who incessantly speak of fear and the guillotine as the one thing which looks for him, to disparage and trouble the National Convention."<sup>2</sup> Seeking to defend himself, Tallien was cut short by Robespierre and Billaud-Varennés, who told the Convention that the men of whom Tallien spoke were, in fact, good Jacobins.<sup>3</sup> That same evening he was stricken from the ranks of the Jacobins Club.

As early as June of 1794, Robespierre had Tallien put under surveillance for the Committee of Public Safety.<sup>4</sup> He had reflected upon the letters of Marc-Antoine Jullien, his special envoy to Bordeaux after Tallien's departure, and could now base his accusations against Tallien upon the written notes.<sup>5</sup> Tallien, realizing that his days

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<sup>1</sup>Speech of Tallien before the Convention, June 12, 1794; Reimp. Moniteur, XX, 719.

<sup>2</sup>Speech of Robespierre, June 12, 1794; ibid., XX, 719.

<sup>3</sup>Speech of Billaud-Varennés, June 12, 1794; ibid., XX, 719.

<sup>4</sup>Reports of the surveillance in Baudoin freres, eds. Papiers inédits trouvés chez Robespierre, St.-Just, Payan, etc., supprimés ou omis par Courtois (Paris, 1829), t. I, 368-369, 372-374, 376; cited in Turquan, La Citoyenne Tallien, 336-339.

<sup>5</sup>Letters from Jullien to Robespierre, 1 Floréal (April 26, 1794), 12 Messidor (June 30, 1794), 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 25 Prairial (May 30, 31, Juin, 2, 3, and 13, 1794), Honoré Riouffe, Memoirs d'un détenu pour servir à l'histoire de la Tyrannie de Robespierre suivie du rapport fait au nom de la Commission chargée de l'examen des papiers trouvée chez Robespierre et ses complices, Par E.B. Courtois (Paris, Year III), 333-339, 348-359.

were numbered unless he struck quickly, boldly conspired with Freron, Fouché, and Barras in order to halt Robespierre. This intrigue was so well known, however, that the deputy Gillet, on mission to Belgium, informed the Committee of 23 Messidor (July 11, 1794), that the émigrés considered Tallien as one of the leaders in the group which was going to overthrow the Committee of Public Safety.<sup>1</sup>

The events of the next two weeks are well known. The subtle attacks by Robespierre on the deputies, his failure to point out any of the accused by name, and the inevitable gathering of the anti-Robespierrists into an alliance with the uncommitted "Marsh" at the Convention, all culminated in the coup of 9 Thermidor, and the destruction of the Republic of Virtue, the Committee of Public Safety, and the Jacobins Club.

Tallien had reached his peak of power in the Revolution. He had conquered Robespierre, and now stood acknowledged as one of the leaders of the new regime. As Thermidor proved to be his high point, so it also became the beginning of the end for Tallien. He and the others sought to abolish all that Robespierre had done but, in doing this, France weakened herself. The Robespierrists had accomplished much. Stability had been given the currency, the war was favorable for the Republic, many enemies of the state had been imprisoned, and the Thermidoreans, as Tallien's group was called, attempted to throw all of these gains out because they had been accomplished by Robespierre. The Convention would survive, but its legacy to the Directory would be mismanagement and misrule.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Gillet to the Committee of Public Safety, 23 Messidor (July 11, 1794), No. 361, Mercure universel; cited in Kuscinski, Dictionnaire des Conventionnels, 577.

As for Tallien, he never again captured the power which he felt the first few days after Thermidor. He was, of course, reinstated into the Jacobins Club, and in December of 1794 he married Teresa. (She came to be looked upon as the force behind Tallien's attack on Robespierre). Tallien came under repeated attack at the Convention for his terroristic activities, his consorting with an emigre, and for his part in the September massacres. His star was rapidly falling when he was sent to Quiberon as an envoy of the reconstituted Committee of Public Safety (1795), and was accused of murdering royalist prisoners without sanction from the republican General, Hoche. He denied this, but was denounced openly at the Paris assembly.

Believing that he was still important enough to be nominated as one of the new Directors, Tallien was exceedingly disappointed when his name was passed over in the nominations. He was elected, however, as a deputy to the Cinq-cents, one of the newly created legislative bodies, but had no influence, no credit, and was suspected by all of the political parties as an opportunist. Teresa left him, and went to Barras whom she saw as the next ruler of France. And in 1798, Tallien was turned out of the Cinq-cents.

For the first time in nearly a decade, Jean-Lambert Tallien found himself out of the revolutionary sphere. The succession of events had passed him by. In 1798, he followed Bonaparte to Egypt. There he was placed in a position of little importance and, though he published a journal, La décade Egyptienne, he failed in his mission with Napoleon. The latter had appointed Tallien a member of the Egyptian Institute, but this had brought the former deputy little remuneration.

Following Napoleon's departure, Tallien was ordered to leave Egypt by General Menou, the commander of French forces there. The bad luck which had plagued him since the overthrow of Robespierre continued, and his ship was captured by the British, and taken to London as a war prize. Much to his surprise, he was treated quite handsomely by the opposition Whigs. He completely swept London society and was, indeed, lionized by it. Nevertheless, he yearned for France and, reaching his homeland in 1802, was immediately struck with a divorce suit by Teresa. Very sadly he complied with her request.

From 1802-1804 Tallien rested secure in the knowledge that Fouché and Talleyrand, now important figures in the French government of Napoleon, also had shady pasts, and would provide for him. In 1804, Tallien requested an official position from the Foreign Minister, Talleyrand. Napoleon refused to approve any appointment for Tallien, but the minister bided his time. One day while going through foreign office dispatches, he came across a letter from M. Angelucci, commissaire of commercial relations for France, resident at Alicante, Spain. He wrote that yellow fever had broken out in the area.<sup>1</sup> Several days later, Talleyrand received word that Angelucci had succumbed to the disease, and his post was open.

Talleyrand then approached Napoleon with Tallien's name as a nominee for the Consular post at Alicante. Napoleon was quite willing, for as Pierre Loevenbruck states in his article, "Tallien, Consul de France a Alicante," On y mourait, si facilement, que Napoleon aurait

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from M. Angelucci to the foreign ministry, 10 Vendémiaire (October 1, 1804); cited in Pierre Loevenbruck, "Tallien, Consul de France a Alicante," Revue d'histoire diplomatique (Paris, 1927), Vols. 40-41, 212.

en mauvais grace de le refuser à l'homme qu'il détestait."<sup>1</sup> On November 27, 1804 Tallien's appointment was approved, and he left for Alicante. Almost immediately he fell sick, and reports filtered back to Paris that he had died. This allowed all those who had been implicated with Tallien at 9 Thermidor, and at the trial of Louis XVI, to breathe somewhat easier.<sup>2</sup>

Tallien survived, however, and on 25 Thermidor (August 12, 1805), he was ordered to return to France. Again he fell sick, and his secretary wrote: "Il y a cent cinquante jours que nous sommes arrivez, le cent quarantieme qu'il est malade."<sup>3</sup> Tallien's illness cost him dearly, he lost an eye to the yellow fever. Less than two months later, he returned to France, determined to maintain his position of consul but in another area.

In June of 1807, he again asked Talleyrand to obtain an appointment for him, this time through the Empress Josephine. (She had been an intimate friend of Teresa, and Tallien perhaps used his ex-wife's friendship to press his case. It was because of Josephine's close association with Teresa, incidentally, that Napoleon had little use for Tallien). Talleyrand, however, had reached an impasse with the Emperor, and was in retirement. He was replaced by Champagny, who desired to fill the vacant post at Alicante. Tallien did not want a re-appointment to this disease ridden port, and wrote the foreign minister that Jerome Bonaparte, King of Westphalia, had shown interest in having him as a consul. And the Emperor had promised him a position,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 212.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 212.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to the foreign ministry, n.d.; cited in ibid., 215.



too. The post in Wesphalia did not go to Tallien, and by 1809 he was destitute, selling his books and belongings to make ends meet. His last source of influence, Josephine, had been divorced by Napoleon. Tallien still was Consul to Alicante, but only in name; he had not been there for three years.

In 1814-1815, the Empire crumbled, and the Bourbons ascended the throne of France. Tallien was officially relieved of the title he had borne for nine years, and was now at the end of a lusterless career of public service. The last event in his life which was of importance occurred in 1820, when Louis XVIII gave him a pension after hearing of the miserable plight he was in. It was sweet revenge for Louis to give this money to a regicide, but Tallien did not have the pension long enough to enjoy it. Jean-Lambert Tallien died on November 16, 1820, unmourned and attended by a single servant. He died as an unknown, much as he was born. Though he had come from nowhere to play a leading role in a critical turn of events, Tallien had been too eager to change sides, to take advantage of every mean opportunity. He was cordially disliked by all who had worked with him, and his low character had prevented him from calling many his friends. His only lasting fame, if it may be called that, lay in his action of 9 Thermidor.

### CONCLUSION

To Jean-Lambert Tallien - an innkeeper's son - as to many other young men without fortune or strong family connections, the Revolution seemed to offer a field of unlimited opportunity. From the beginning he espoused the doctrines of reform and determined to make his career in the service of the Revolution. He possessed those qualities of mind and spirit which stamp the successful revolutionary leader. He was bold and aggressive and, when the occasion demanded it, capable of making firm decisions and of steadfastly carrying them out. A talented demagogue and a skilled propagandist, he was destined to play a leading role in the revolutionary struggles, but he might have carved a more permanent place for himself had it not been for serious defects in his character. Tallien lacked sincerity and integrity, and when a conflict arose between the revolutionary ideals and his self interest, he always chose the weakest course. His colleagues soon recognized this fault and when his usefulness was over, they would have no more to do with him.

Beyond any doubt, Tallien had served the revolutionary government creditably as a deputy on mission before he was sent to Bordeaux. But, it was at this city that he achieved real prominence. He arrived there in the midst of the federalist rebellion which swept over France after the purge of the Girondins. Utilizing the repressive instruments of the Terror, he sought to "purify" Bordeaux so that she could re-enter the Republic with the other revolutionary "pure" communes. Walter Kerr

maintains that Tallien's reign in Bordeaux "was a joke," but this is hardly the impression that one receives after an examination of the lists of the tried, imprisoned, and executed Bordelais citizens during the five month period beginning in October of 1793.

While it is true that Carrier at Nantes, and Fouche at Lyon, were more excessive in some respects, this in no way detracts from the ruthlessness which Tallien practiced at Bordeaux. More than the others, however, he was pressured into terrorism. This is indicated by his support of the subordinate groups of the terror organization, the committee of surveillance, the commission militaire, and the revolutionary tribunal, all of which he forced upon the populace. These groups claimed the role of protectors of the people, and Tallien, wrapped up in the propaganda and the Jacobin faith, was trapped in the web of his own lies. As for the people, they were too apathetic and hungry to do more than mildly resent any excesses committed by these revolutionary groups.

Beginning in October of 1793, Tallien used the terror organizations to humble the already demoralized Bordelais. He put the city under military rule, made provisions as to armaments, regulated the number and type of person who could see him, and had disposed of his opponents, either through the use of the guillotine, the revolutionary tribunal, or the judgment of the commission militaire. During the last week of November 1793, he met Teresa Cabarrus who reportedly influenced Tallien in the direction of humanitarianism. Yet the terror was not abated, although Tallien and his colleague, Ysabeau, did relent to a degree. Even his mistress could not halt the savagery and brutality occurring at Bordeaux.

With almost three months of repression to his credit, and two months more of relative indulgence (relaxation of the military rule, reconstitution of the committee of surveillance and the commission militaire) also marked up, Tallien came under the cloak of suspicion of the Committee of Public Safety, the State regulatory agency. Aware that he had lost favor among the revolutionary groups in Paris, Tallien left Bordeaux in mid-February of 1794, determined to defend himself at the bar of the Convention and the Committee. He was unable to draw the attention of either body until March 12. On this date he appeared at the Convention and complained of the injustices visited upon the Bordelais and against him personally. With this forceful speech he restored some of the luster which had surrounded him before his mission to Bordeaux.

Tallien now realized that the longer he delayed, the more he would come under the scrutiny of the "strongest" man in revolutionary France, Robespierre. He had come to Paris expecting the "Incorruptible" to aid him, but the latter refused to assist Tallien in any way and, indeed, set about to destroy him. Robespierre had little respect for the former deputy to the Gironde who had such faint regard for the revolutionary principles of truth, virtue, honor, morality, and the love of one's neighbors. Robespierre scorned Tallien and rejected his flattery and friendship.

With the arrest of Teresa Cabarrus in Paris (May 22, 1794), Tallien had an excuse to attack Robespierre. He allied himself with the other disgruntled deputies, Fréron, Fouché, and Barras, and became a ringleader in the conspiracy of 9 Thermidor. It was Tallien who

brandished the dagger at the Convention, vowing to plunge it into the heart of the new Cromwell (Robespierre), if the Convention refused to order his arrest. Undoubtedly, the deputies were inspired by this bit of sham histrionics. They believed further that Robespierre would not stop at the mere elimination of the recalcitrants, but was prepared to purge the entire Convention. Consequently, the anti-Robespierre forces carried the day. And the former terrorist, Jean-Lambert Tallien, reached his zenith of importance, only to be cast aside soon after by a generation which had no respect for him.

APPENDIX I

DECREE OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION, AUGUST 6, 1793:<sup>1</sup>

- Article 1. All the acts made by the gathering which has taken the title of Commission Populaire de Salut Public in Bordeaux are deadened as an offense against the sovereignty and liberty of the French people.
- Article 2. All those who composed this group, as well as those who supported it, cooperated or adhered to its acts, are declared traitors to the fatherland, and put outside the law; their goods are confiscated to the profit of the Republic.
- Article 3. The commune of Bordeaux will replace, with the shortest delay, the 357,320 piastres carried off with an armed hand from the hotel de la monnaie, and which was destined for the use of the Navy.
- Article 4. All of the actual agents of the Bordeaux Public Authority will be held individually responsible for the sum of 357,320 piastres,....
- Article 5. The National treasury will give to the commissaires, who will be named by the Bordelais, the sum of 2 million livres, the loan of which had been decreed March 30, to furnish subsistences to this town; these commissaires will not be chosen from among the members of the constituted authorities, nor from among the citizens who adhered or cooperated in the aiberticide and counter-revolutionary [attitudes] of the individuals composing the Commission Populaire de Salut Public.
- Article 6. The present decree will be immediately brought to the representatives of the people at Toulouse and Montauban by a special courier, and they will be charged with the task of taking all the means of instruction and of force which they will judge necessary in order to assure its prompt execution, to make the laws respected and to guarantee the citizens from oppression.

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<sup>1</sup>See Archives Parlementaires, LXX, 377-378.

## APPENDIX II

### DECREE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE AT BORDEAUX, OCTOBER 18, 1793:<sup>1</sup>

- Article 1. The government of Bordeaux will be provisionally military, and exists under the surveillance of the representatives of the people.
- Article 2. Both the infantry and cavalry, which accompanied the representatives, are declared to be the revolutionary army.
- Article 3. There will be added to this corps a Bordelais battalion of sans-culottes, chosen and indicated by the national club.
- Article 4. There will be created without delay by the representatives of the people, a revolutionary committee composed of 24 members, charged with the task of looking for all members of the conspiracy, and of arresting all those who will be designated by good citizens as enemies of the republic.
- Article 5. The committee of surveillance, established by the representatives of the people and actually in activity, will continue its functions up to the moment of installation of a new one.
- Article 6. All of the constituted authorities, both civil and military, of Bordeaux will be renewed with the utmost speed; and to this effort the representatives of the people invite all good citizens to give to them a list of the men they believe worthy and capable of filling the public offices.
- Article 7. There will be formed without delay, by the representatives of the people, a military commission, composed of seven members, charged with the task of identifying outlaws, and of executing them within twenty-four hours, including all the emigres who have returned to the territory of the republic and priests who are not under the law of deportation.
- Article 8. All suspects will be arrested. The accused will be indicted before a competent tribunal, and then conducted to national houses (maisons nationales), situated outside

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<sup>1</sup>See Vivie, Histoire de la Terreur, III, 6-9.

the limits of the department of the Gironde. None of the detained will be put at liberty without an order from the representatives of the people.

....

- Article 10. Within the next twenty-four hours, all citizens are required to deposit their weapons in the rooms of the Chateau-Trompette for the use of the good sans-culottes, [who are] alone worthy of defending liberty and the republican government.

....

- Article 13. There will be made frequently, by four commissioners of the sections, accompanied by a detachment of the revolutionary army, domiciliary visits to public houses, private homes, stoves and boats, in order to discover grain, flour, or foreign merchandise, all of which is prohibited.

- Article 17. Conforming to these decrees, all the expenses of the revolutionary army, and all other extraordinary expenses will be supported by the rich, and especially by those known by their income and federalist sentiments.

- Article 18. Accordingly, there will be made a statement of all the particular, commercial men who will contribute to this outlay of money; and there will be addressed to them requisitions of a determined sum which must be paid within twenty-four hours under penalty of military execution and confiscation of their goods.

....

- Article 20. All measures of general security, and those relative to the subsistence and to the existence and happiness of the people, will be taken by the representatives, in common consent with the newly constituted authorities, and consigned in the new decrees, which shall be made public by copy.

- Article 21. Tomorrow General Brune is to solemnly proclaim the following decrees:

1. The French government is revolutionary up to the peace.
2. Those relative to the arrest of strangers (étrangers), and subjects of Great Britain.
3. Those relative to the prohibition of English goods.
4. The present decree, which is to be printed, posted, and sent to the municipality.

(Signed) C. Alex, Isabeau, M.-A. Baudot, Chaudron-Roussau, Tallien.

(Counter-signed) Peyron d'Hervel, Secretary of the Commission.



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